

City of Fresno

*City Hall
2600 Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93721*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, October 28, 2019

6:00 PM

Regular Meeting

**Fresno City Hall, Second Floor
Room 2165N (Conference Room A)**

Historic Preservation Commission

Chair Patrick Boyd

Vice Chair Jason Hatwig, LEED, AP, BD+C

Commissioners:

Robin Goldbeck; Paul Halajian, AIA; Ron McNary;

C. Kristina Roper, M.A.; Don Simmons, Ph.D.

Staff:

Daniel Zack, AICP Assistant Director; Laura Groves van Onna, Historic

Preservation Specialist; Harkiran Kaur, Services Aide, Recording

Secretary; Rina Gonzales, Deputy City Attorney III

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chair Patrick Boyd at 6:04 PM.

Commissioners Present: Patrick Boyd, Robin Goldbeck (late), Paul Halajian, Jason Hatwig, and Ron McNary

Staff Present: Dan Zack, Amber Piona and John Hastrup (CAO).

Present 5 - Chair Patrick Boyd, Vice Chair Jason Hatwig, Commissioner Don Simmons, Commissioner Ron McNary, and Commissioner Paul Halajian

Absent 2 - Commissioner Robin Goldbeck, and Commissioner C. Kristina Roper

II. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

A. [ID19-11455](#) Approve Minutes for September 23, 2019.

Attachments: [HPC_Minutes_Sep_23_2019](#)

The minutes for September 23, 2019 were approved 4-0 with a motion by Commissioner Hatwig and a second by Commissioner McNary. Commissioner Goldbeck was not present for this vote.

III. APPROVE AGENDA

The agenda with was approved 4-0 with a motion by Commissioner Hatwig and a second by Commissioner Halajian. Commissioner Goldbeck was not present for this vote.

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. None.

V. CONTINUED MATTERS

A. None.

VI. COMMISSION ITEMS

- A. [ID19-11456](#) CONSIDER AND MAKE FINDINGS ON APPLICATION P19-02780 FOR FENCING AT ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL CATHOLIC CHURCH (HP #086) AND ST. JOHN'S RECTORY (HP #087) LOCATED AT 2814 MARIPOSA STREET PURSUANT TO FMC 12-1606(a)(2) and 12-1617.

Attachments: [St. John's Cathedral & Rectory App Attachments](#)

Commissioner Robin Goldbeck arrives at 6:05 p.m

Assistant Director Dan Zack presented the staff report on the application P19-02780 to construct fencing; the request entails an exterior alteration visible from the public right-of-way. The applicant submitted a Pre-Application, consisting of conceptual fencing plans which were reviewed by the Commission at a regularly scheduled meeting on October 22, 2018. Staff recommends the approval of the project application.

Douglas DuRivage, (1550 N Fresno St): The only addition I would add to staff's presentation is that there is an additional gate on R Street next to Mariposa.

Commissioner Paul Halajian: There's a statue on corner, how does the gate accommodate that?

DuRivage: it accommodates it now. This T-shape is brick pavement that comes up inside the property line from the sidewalk, it's a path up to the area where there's a statue. It's facing out toward the street. The plan, conceptually, is to turn that statue around and develop this into a little bit more of a courtyard where people can come and sit, pray, venerate, and so forth. The nature of the fencing is going to require us to change the nature of that brick path anyway. But those gates are designed to be open every morning, as long as the church is open, so as people have access to the cathedral they will have access to that courtyard. No other changes from that standpoint.

Halajian: Two questions. First, the only brick column that's being added is the one on the corner, is that correct?

DuRivage: The existing brick columns are here in green. There's one brick column, when we vacated the alley two years ago, up here; we added that column in conjunction with the requirements necessary to secure that alley.

Halajian: When the church is not open, the sliding gates are closed. How will folks get out if trapped in church?

DuRivage: Right now, the way these gates would work, there's a mechanism here. This whole courtyard is accessible through this gate.

Halajian: Is that a sliding gate or a push gate?

DuRivage: Right now it's a sliding gate. My understanding is that there's a mechanism that would allow that gate to open. We know that that's an issue for fire and life safety so we need to figure out what that mechanism would be.

Chair Patrick Boyd: The existing fencing you have along the alley is roughly six feet tall and straight in nature. Is there a desire to go to similar but different fencing with a curved top on it?

DuRivage: There are cost concerns. The existing, stylized fence was put in during a restoration (before 2005, possibly '96 or '98) and was funded by a private donor. The reason that there are columns all around the parking lot is because the fencing was intended to go all the way around. This wasn't completed because both the donor ran out of money, and the pastor or bishop decided they didn't want to close the parking lot off. Times have changed, and we're under attack more often. You heard the presentation last year; nothing's changed since then. Right now we're just trying to protect the safety of our priests and our workers.

Halajian: What color will the fence be?

DuRivage: Dark brown. It will match the handrails that were recently reconstructed.

Halajian: Are the sliding gates motorized?

DuRivage: The vehicle gates definitely are, and the front gate will be, too. The other pedestrian gates will not be.

Halajian: Has the planning department seen this?

DuRivage: Yes.

Halajian: And, coming in off Tulare, they're not going to make you put a stacking lane on your property?

DuRivage: No. We did have to offset the gate on Tulare Street so that there is more of a staging area back from the curb. We still have to go through planning for final review, but as of right now they are satisfied with that six-foot offset.

Halajian: And it will be open when the church is open?

DuRivage: Yes. It will be open when staff arrives, at 7AM. This has been reviewed by all of the city departments, including fire. Once [the Commission has] reviewed it and made recommendations it will go back through everyone else again to make sure we've picked everything up.

Public Comment Opens

Chair Boyd opened the floor for public comment. Two audience members identified themselves as students from California State University Fresno, and stated that they were attending the meeting as extra credit for class and had no comment on the item before the Commission. Chair Boyd thanked them for coming.

Public Comment Closed

Commissioner Jason Hatwig: I get the necessity for keeping the resource protected. You know, we've had too many resources lost because of

vandalism. It's an unfortunate situation. You'd hope a church could just remain open and people would respect that, but we're finding more and more that this is becoming an issue with our resources. I would rather see something happen where the resource can be preserved and protected, so my kids can see it and my grandkids can see it.

Commissioner Robin Goldbeck: I second what Jason has said; it's unfortunate to come to this point. It's better to preserve the resource than take a chance on harm coming to the priests and the community.

Boyd: This is my area of expertise. One, I am happy you are using wrought-iron fencing, that's great. Some of the decisions you've made are really working well. You mentioned a landscape plan, that will be important because with the fence on top of the turf, it's not going to irrigate or mow well. A lot of cathedrals have been designed with fences as part of the architecture; this one has all of the elements on the side designed to be open to the public. When a fence goes up, changing the orientation of the statue, creating a patio, these are all things you're going to find yourself needing to do in these areas. In addition, you can change that frontage landscape so that you're providing a space for people to walk through. I know the fence is going up for security, but it doesn't have to look like it's just for security; it can look like it's designed to be there. What Paul was alluding to is the idea that cantilevered sliding gates work well in these areas, but for pedestrian access, they're not welcoming. Nothing says "open up a jail or meat locker" like sliding a pedestrian gate open. . So I'd reconsider on some of these areas, maybe going to a double swing gate. One, because you'll be able to put your crash bars on them much easier, for ADA access. They're still lockable, but they're much more pedestrian friendly. But I love in this area here, being able to open the entire thing is great. A warning though; your base map is not accurate. The way this is laid out in the front yard... these steps don't come out this far. Some of these other elements are a little different. They don't line up correctly. One of the things I was particularly concerned about is having rolling gates. I would guess this is your only ADA access in and out of the building; having ADA access out and having a rolling gate at that point, without the ability to get out in an emergency... I can't believe that Permits hasn't picked up on that

one. We should double-check on that one, because usually a sliding gate in a situation like that would be a no-no. I was thinking, because the layout of the front area here is a little bit different, you could feasibly carry this ADA access across through the courtyard and out through this side gate here, with a crash bar. If that's an acceptable pathway; it's a little circuitous, and sometimes that's a no-no. Last but not least, we've got the existing fence up there with is a straight fence. Visually, with the slanted slats or going straight, picking one for the entire site and completing that will really pull it together; you're committing to an architectural style. When you start mismatching fence designs and different elements like that, it really starts looking hodgepodgy. As beautiful a place as this is, we can really continue the theme of the architecture.

Hatwig: I think there was a slide that showed a photo of the ramps in the front. There's the access you're talking about. The front, where the brick ends, that might be four foot wide at the bottom of the steps; so you could have accessibility cut through the garden to the crash gate on the side.

Boyd: Sometimes those little details—I have twenty five years of history with doing stuff like this—when I get the base map wrong, it's that little tiny thing that spirals out of control. Also if your fencing is looking more like a jail instead of welcoming, that's not the message we want to portray here. By making sure we slide these things out of the way and, as you mentioned, take care of that corner... with just the fencing as it is, it's really unwelcoming. But if we can turn that around and make a courtyard out of it as we said, that completely changes that corner into something desirable.

Goldbeck: Is there a process for building permits for a fence.

Assistant Director Dan Zack: Non-residential fencing requires a building permit.

Goldbeck: So there would be an accessibility review, a path-of-travel review?

Boyd: Usually. Any commercial stuff we do where we throw in a fence, that's

the first red flag. Your path of travel, accessible parking spaces, fences, crash bars. A crash bar on a wrought iron fence is an issue; they need a screen or people outside can use them to get in.

Halajian: We talking about ADA; the bigger issue is fire/life/safety. That is what governs the size of those openings. Let's say for example, the same people who are vandalizing the church closed all the gates while there was something going on and lit a fire. You would have all those people trapped inside. So you have to make sure that all the people inside the building can exit—there has to be adequate exit width.

Boyd: ADA is always a concern, and there are specific details that need to be worked out. But the trigger, as Paul says, is the fire issue. I can't imagine a fire reviewer looking at that is going to be okay with a slide gate along pedestrian areas.

Zack: I haven't reviewed the preliminary DRC [Development Review Committee] comments from Fire and Building on this, so I don't know if they've already given direction on that or not.

Hatwig: A lot of times DRC is not going to give you all the conditions of approval.

Zack: The big-picture red flags.

Boyd: The little details are the ones that will really change how it looks and functions. I was going to make a comment about using black as a color for the fencing, but dark brown is a way better choice.

Zack: Those brown elements were painted last year, so they're really fresh.

Boyd: They're fresh and shiny and look really good. They almost look like they're deep stain on wood; it looks great.

Hatwig: Thinking about those things in a forum like this is really helpful for the applicant as they move forward into these other departments, knowing

that on historic content these are great ideas, but in a real-world aspect incorporating those things can fit both historic design and functionality.

Boyd: Do re-measure some of those sections on your base map, on the walkways on R Street, I think they're flip-flopped. One shown as a four-foot walkway is actually seven feet, and then where the wider walkway is placed it's actually over to the south a little more and is only a three-footer. Again I have made those errors in my own measurements. You do have to go back to the drawing board a lot of the time; it's not just a simple correction. Especially on something big like those gates at the entry, you want to make sure you get those absolutely right.

Goldbeck: Are we giving direction on the concept, and then seeing this again with more detail? How does this work?

Zack: They are in permit review right now for their planning entitlements, so we're recommending that you take action today so that they can continue on. If there are conditions that you want to put on your approval on some of these elements that have been gone over you can do that. It's your prerogative if you want to bring them back but just be aware that before it was conceptual pre-application review, but now they're in the pipeline. They have applied, they're under permit review.

Halajian: The question I have for the applicant is what are the challenges that would be presented if you were to go with a pair of swinging gates for the pedestrian gates, over sliding ones?

DuRivage: The swinging gates just aren't as secure. We looked at so many different conditions, from a vehicle standpoint and a pedestrian standpoint. I know that Building's looked at this already; the fencing contractor has gone through and extensively met with them on that, and with Fire. If I remember correctly I think it's in the comments with Fire and so forth. Because these are security gates, and they are designed to be open during regular business hours, much the same as any business entry that might be labelled "To remain unlocked during business hours," that's how these gates are being viewed. And so they are only secured and closed when there is no

business going on there, and when there is business, they're open.

Halajian: The City has ruled that, from a fire/life/safety standpoint, when you're open you're open, and when you're closed, you're closed.

DuRivage: That is what I understand.

Halajian: So it's more of an aesthetic issue or issue of compatibility. I think we would all agree that swinging gates would be more harmonious with the look of the building.

DuRivage: The way the landing is at the bottom of the ramp comes out right at the sidewalk, there's no possible way to put any other kind of gate there other than a sliding gate. Originally there was a separate gate there at the landing area, but that created a problem of creating a smaller opening. I know the site plan is not accurate; I think the draftsman that the gate contractor hired just used an old site plan from when the cathedral was renovated.

Boyd: It sounds like you've worked through those particular details at those locations and this represents the solution you've come up with.

DuRivage: Every department, Traffic, Public Works, Fire, they've all chimed in with their comments. It's been a challenge to balance all of their priorities. Nobody wants to make the cathedral not inviting; we want the community to come in, and certainly go out, safely.

Halajian: Back to Robin's question, are we approving in concept?

Zack: No, tonight is about approving the permit. That is what is being proposed, anyway. You can either approve, approve with conditions, or deny.

Boyd: What are people's feelings about conditions? What about the curved top [to the fence] versus the straight top?

Halajian: It's not out of character, I think it's fine.

Goldbeck: I think the point of that is enhancing the security.

Boyd: I mean we went through the points and everything, I think I had all of my concerns answered. We know that there's going to be continued work going on in the interior and the landscaping; those things will soften up a lot of the potential brutality of having a fence on the outside there.

Commissioner Ron McNary: I wish we didn't have to do the curved top, because it makes it look more institutional.

Boyd: The argument against it is that the existing fencing is a straight top.

Halajian: But that's on the alley, isn't it?

Boyd: Right, in the alley and on the other side. The argument for it is that the doorways have those curved features. If you're going to borrow something from the existing architecture, it's the front door.

Halajian: The thing that I am most troubled by is the fact that Mary has to turn the other way to accommodate the fence layout. Is there anyway, if you're going to go to the trouble of repositioning her, that you could just slide her back so she's still looking at the street?

DuRivage: There's always that possibility. I know that nobody wants to see Mary or any other statue behind a fence. One of the most troubling things that we had to deal with at one of our other churches, Sacred Heart over there off Cedar, the statue of Jesus was being vandalized constantly. It stopped when they put a fence there, but you now have this fence; it's beautiful wrought iron, but Jesus looks like he's in jail. We don't want that. We really want to make this more of a courtyard. We're looking to try to make lemonade out of lemons, so creating that courtyard opportunity by turning the statue around—or pushing it back or relocating it—something will happen there to make that more inviting.

Zack: That's where my brain was going, if you put it back by the corner of the building, she could face the courtyard and the street, without symbolically turning her back on the community. It's still protected.

Halajian: Is that doable or does that place a hardship on you?

DuRivage: Well, there's no money to do that right now. It's a hardship. If you're asking my opinion, I would rather you let us decide what we want to do on our property, inside our property line, to what best suits the liturgical aspects of the church.

Halajian: You understand, you don't want Mary's back to the street. I have nothing else.

Zack: As a reminder, staff recommendation has two conditions, neither of which were design modifications; just that [Historic Preservation Specialist Laura Groves van Onna] be able to document before and after, and then if anything during the final building phase is altered, that she be able to sign off on those changes. Those are the two conditions.

Boyd: I think we've talked through our design concerns. We don't have anything else. Is there a motion?

Staff recommendation was approved 5-0 on a motion by Commissioner McNary and a second by Commissioner Hatwig.

VII. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

1. None.

VIII. UNSCHEDULED ITEMS

A. Members of the Commission

1. None.

B. Staff

1. None.

C. General Public

1. None.

IX. NEXT MEETING: November 25, 2019, 6 PM Conference Room A, City Hall.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Boyd adjourned the meeting at 6:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Laura Groves van Onna, Historic Preservation Specialist

Amber Piona, Recording Secretary