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Title: REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE PRE-APPLICATION, CONSISTING OF CONCEPTUAL FENCING PLANS, FOR ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL CATHOLIC CHURCH (HISTORIC PROPERTY #086) AND ST. JOHN'S RECTORY (HISTORIC PROPERTY #087) LOCATED AT 2814 MARIPOSA STREET PURSUANT TO FMC 12-1606(a)(2) and (b)(23).

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Attachments: 1. 6.St. John's Cathedral & Rectory Pre-App Attachments.pdf

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October 22, 2018

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SUBJECT:
REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE PRE-APPLICATION, CONSISTING OF CONCEPTUAL FENCING PLANS, FOR ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL CATHOLIC CHURCH (HISTORIC PROPERTY #086) AND ST. JOHN'S RECTORY (HISTORIC PROPERTY #087) LOCATED AT 2814 MARIPOSA STREET PURSUANT TO FMC 12-1606(a)(2) and (b)(23).

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission review and comment on the Pre-Application, consisting of conceptual fencing plans, for St. John's Cathedral Catholic Church (Historic Property #086) and St. John's Rectory (Historic Property #087) located at 2814 Mariposa Street pursuant to FMC 12-1606 (a)(2) and (b)(23). The purpose of this review and comment is to initiate discussion and to provide advisement before moving forward in preparation for a proposed project. Review of a Pre-Application is not a formal project review, cannot result in an approval or denial, and may not be relied upon by an applicant for any purpose other than obtaining generally-applicable information about the historic review process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The owner representative of St. John's Cathedral Catholic Church and Rectory has requested that their Pre-Application, consisting of conceptual fencing plans, be reviewed and commented upon by the Historic Preservation Commission. Primary concerns for Staff are the façade of the church and its main entry, as they are primary character-defining features of the historic resource that are especially visible from the public right-of-way due to the church's corner location. Staff encourages discussion in pursuit of an optimal design for fencing that enhances, and minimizes any potential adverse effects to, the historic character of the property.

Pursuant to FMC 12-1606(a)(2) and (b)(23), Staff requests that the Commission review and comment on this Pre-Application for the purposes of initiating discussion and providing advisement before moving forward in preparation for a proposed project. Review of a Pre-Application is not a formal project review, cannot result in an approval or denial, and may not be relied upon by an applicant for any purpose other than obtaining generally-applicable information about the historic review process.

BACKGROUND

The owner representative of St. John's Cathedral Catholic Church and Rectory has requested that their Pre-Application, consisting of conceptual fencing plans, be reviewed and commented upon by the Historic Preservation Commission.

The conceptual fencing plans envision a 7-foot tubular steel perimeter fence that would surround the entire property. Pickets would be curved outward toward the sidewalk to inhibit climbing and would have pointed ends without decorative finials. Simple steel posts would be spaced approximately 10 feet apart; decorative brick posts (currently in use around the rear parking lot) would not be provided. Cantilevered sliding gates would be installed at points of entry, the largest of which would be placed in front of the façade on Mariposa Street. These conceptual plans are being proposed by the applicant for security purposes when the facilities are closed, especially after dark, due to targeted vandalism that has periodically and is increasingly taking place.

Upon initial review of the Pre-Application for St. John's Cathedral Catholic Church and Rectory, Staff finds that the fence as currently proposed does not conform to Downtown fencing standards as put forth in the Development Code. Approval of such a design would require a variance or other form of regulatory relief. Staff also finds that the façade of the church and its main entry are the primary concerns as they are primary character-defining features of the historic resource that are especially visible from the public right-of-way due to the church's corner location. Staff encourages discussion in pursuit of an optimal design for fencing that enhances, and minimizes any potential adverse effects to, the historic character of the property.

There may be some considerable alternatives to essentially closing off the property and visibility of it to the public for a majority of the hours each day, while increasing security measures. For example:

- Fencing could be installed to surround all areas of the property except for the main entry and brick paved steps leading up to it AND
- The proposed wrought iron fencing could be redesigned to match the existing fencing that currently lines the parking lot in the rear portion of the property - including the incorporation

of brick posts topped by orbs.

The intention of this Pre-Application is 1) to obtain advice and guidance on retaining a sense of place for this historic resource while considering adaptation and innovation for present and future needs and 2) to gain a consensus on what is recommended, what is likely to be permissible, and what may require further discussion.

St. John's Cathedral Catholic Church (1902) located at 2814 Mariposa Street consists of a brick church with a double-height ceiling flanked by a tower on each of the façade, tapering to a point that doubles the height of the main building. It was designed by architect T. M. Birmingham and built by J. E. Birmingham and F. J. Williams, with elements of the Gothic Revival architectural style. This church is located in Downtown Fresno, and it is the oldest remaining Catholic Church in Fresno. St. John's was originally constructed outside of city limits but soon became incorporated as part of a residential development in Fresno. It still functions as a Roman Catholic Cathedral.

St. John's Rectory (1928) located at 2814 Mariposa Street consists of a three-story, brick building with porches extending forward on the first and second stories. It is part of the St. John's Cathedral complex in Downtown Fresno, and therefore contributes to the oldest remaining Catholic Church in Fresno. It also exhibits architectural elements worthy of special consideration.

The Resolutions designating St. John's Cathedral Catholic Church and Rectory to the Local Register of Historic Resources were adopted by Fresno City Council on July 1, 1980. The properties are greater than 50 years of age and possess integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association (FMC 12-1607). Additionally, they are significant for their architecture and for their association with the Catholic Church and its role in early development in Fresno.

Duties and Powers of the Commission:

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance is located at Chapter 12, Article 16 of the Fresno Municipal Code. Section 1606 outlines the duties and powers of the Commission. Sections 1606(a) (2) and (b)(23) specifically refer to the duties entailing review, comment, advisement, and guidance for historic resources:

- (a)(2) The regulation of exterior alterations visible from a public right-of-way including demolition, relocation and new construction, and interior alterations which would affect the significance of Historic Resources or Historic Districts.
- (b)(23) Render advice and guidance, upon the request of a property owner or tenant on the financial and physical aspects of the restoration, alteration, rehabilitation, landscaping or maintenance of any Historic Resource, any Contributor to any Historic District (LHD or NRD) or any Heritage Property.

Historic Review Pre-Application Submittal Check List

The Submittal Check List for the Historic Review Pre-Application is not as comprehensive and final as it would be for a formal project review, and includes the following:

- Current Photographs
 - At least one overall view of the property
 - A detailed view of each historic feature that involves the proposed work

Conceptual Plans

- An existing site plan (and a proposed site plan if different from existing), which can be hand-drawn and is not required to be scale.
- Inspirational visuals and descriptions for the proposed work

Attachments

Exhibit A: State of California Survey Forms for St. John's Cathedral Catholic Church 2814 Mariposa Street Prepared June 24, 1978 by William E. Patnaude for the City of Fresno.

Exhibit B: State of California Survey Forms for St. John's Rectory 2814 Mariposa Street Prepared June, 1978 by William E. Patnaude for the City of Fresno.

Exhibit C: Historic Review Pre-Application Submittal from the owner representative of St. John's Cathedral Catholic Church (Historic Property #086) and St. John's Rectory (Historic Property #087) located at 2814 Mariposa Street, October 2018.