



Legislation Details (With Text)

**File #:** ID18-0970    **Version:** 1    **Name:**

**Type:** Resolution    **Status:** Agenda Ready

**File created:** 8/10/2018    **In control:** City Council

**On agenda:** 9/20/2018    **Final action:**

**Title:** CONTINUED HEARING to consider adoption of resolution related to the designation of a property to the Local Register of Historic Resources  
 1.\*\*\* RESOLUTION - Designating the Herndon Substation Control Building located at 7430 N Weber Avenue, Fresno, California to the Local Register of Historic Resources (Council District 2) (Subject to Mayor's veto)

**Sponsors:** Planning and Development Department

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** 1. 1.Designation Criteria for the Local Register of Historic Resources (FMC 12-1607), 2. 2.DPR forms Herndon Substation Control Building Weber, 3. 3.Herndon Substation Report 2010, 4. 4.CC Resolution Herndon Substation Control Building Weber

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
------	------	-----------	--------	--------

**REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

**September 20, 2018**

**FROM:** JENNIFER K. CLARK, AICP, Director  
Development and Resource Management Department

**THROUGH:** DANIEL ZACK, AICP, Assistant Director  
Development and Resource Management Department

**BY:** LAURA VAN ONNA Historic Preservation Specialist  
Development and Resource Management Department

**SUBJECT**

CONTINUED HEARING to consider adoption of resolution related to the designation of a property to the Local Register of Historic Resources  
1.\*\*\* RESOLUTION - Designating the Herndon Substation Control Building located at 7430 N Weber Avenue, Fresno, California to the Local Register of Historic Resources (Council District 2) (Subject to Mayor's veto)

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that the City Council adopt the attached Resolution designating the Herndon Substation Control Building located at 7430 N Weber Avenue to the Local Register of Historic Resources pursuant to Fresno Municipal Code 12-1607 and 12-1609 as well as Fresno General Plan Policy for Demolition Review HCR-2-g.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff received a demolition permit application from the owner of the Herndon Substation Control Building located at 7430 N Weber Avenue on April 17, 2018. Pursuant to General Plan Policy HCR-2-g, historic preservation staff reviewed the demolition permit for the potential that the building might be eligible for listing in the Local Register of Historic Resources. The building was evaluated with respect to the historic resource criteria of the City of Fresno's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Article 16 of Chapter 12 of the Fresno Municipal Code, and was publicly noticed in *The Fresno Bee* as required by the Ordinance. The Historic Preservation Commission held a noticed public hearing on May 21, 2018 and concluded that the property was eligible for listing in the Local Register of Historic Resources. The Commission hereby forwards the nomination to the City Council for consideration.

## BACKGROUND

An owner representative presented Staff with the "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 - in which Herndon Substation and its Control Building are researched, documented, evaluated, and found to be ineligible for California and Local designation due to lack of integrity, on the premise of the property owner's proposal to demolish the Control Building. Staff is concerned that the finding for the Control Building in this report relies heavily on the loss of integrity for the Herndon Substation as a whole and does not give full consideration to local significance. Staff visited the property on May 4, 2018 to meet with the owner representative and to accurately document the current state of the Control Building and found that the building was structurally sound and intact - as noted in the 2010 report - and that it appeared to be eligible for listing in the Local Register of Historic Resources. Staff has not yet received an official statement from the owner; however, because the Control Building was evaluated and is being put forward for consideration of Local Register listing as a result of a demolition permit application, it is inferred that the owner is not in favor of designation.

**The Herndon Substation Control Building** (1931) is a two-story public utility building on the Herndon Substation site located on a large tract of land located between the San Joaquin River to the north and the community of Herndon to the south. 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. 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. All that remains of the 1931 Herndon Substation is the Control Building. While the Control Building is minimal in decoration, it embodies distinctive characteristics of the Art Deco architectural style with elements that include a flat roof, smooth wall 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. It is the purest example of the Art Deco style in Fresno compared to other properties listed in the Local Register for their Art Deco influences, among which are Fresno County Halls of Records (1935, HP #17) located

at 2281 Tulare Street; the U.S. Post Office (1939, HP #50) located at 2309 Tulare Street; the Fresno Memorial Auditorium (1935, HP #52) located at 2425 Fresno Street; and the Bekins Van and Storage (1926, HP #70) located at 301 Van Ness Avenue. Although integrity of setting, feeling, and association have diminished due to the removal of some equipment and controls from the Control Building, the result is not a loss of these aspects of integrity, nor a loss of integrity. The Control Building retains character-defining features and the ability to convey its significance.

The Herndon Substation Control Building is eligible for listing under 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 economic and social growth of the region and under Criterion iii because it embodies distinctive characteristics of the Art Deco architectural style.

### **Local Register Criteria and Protocols:**

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance is found at Article 16 of Chapter 12 of the Fresno Municipal Code. Section 1607 outlines the criteria for designation of a resource to the Local Register of Historic Resources. A "historic resource" is "any building, structure, object or site" which is generally more than fifty years of age and "possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:

- (i) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- (ii) Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- (iii) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values; or
- (iv) Has yielded or may be likely to yield, information in prehistory or history.

The City's criteria for assessing significance are patterned after the National Register of Historic Places (1966 as amended) which uses letters A-D for significance. Fresno's Local Register is also similar, although not equivalent, to the California Register of Historical Resources which uses a numbering system of 1-4 for criteria. Although the concept of "integrity" is not specifically defined in the City's Ordinance, it is implicitly understood to follow the National Register which defines "integrity" as "the ability of a property to convey its significance." "To retain integrity a property will always possess several and usually most, of the aspects." ("How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" 1988:44).

The process for designating a historic resource is outlined in FMC 12-1609. In brief, a request to designate a resource to the Local Register may be made by the Council, the Commission, the Secretary to the Commission, the property owner, or an authorized representative of the owner (12-1609(a)). Applications for listing use the state protocol for survey forms with both a DPR 523A (Primary) as well as a DPR 523B (Building, Structure, Object Form) (12-1609(a)(1-9)). A notice must be published in a local newspaper at least ten days prior to the hearing and sent to the property owner as well. Commissioners must also physically visit the property prior to the Commission hearing (12-1609(c)(1)).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS**

The designation of historic properties is not a "project" for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act as it will not result in a direct or indirect change in the environment.

## **LOCAL PREFERENCE**

Local preference was not considered because this agenda item does not include a bid or award of a construction services contract.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no additional impact beyond the expenditure of staff time, which is currently budgeted in the FY18 Adopted Budget.

### Attachments:

1. Designation Criteria for the Local Register of Historic Resources and Local Historic Districts (FMC 12-1607)
2. DPR Forms Herndon Substation Control Building - Weber
3. Herndon Substation Report - 2010
4. CC Resolution Herndon Substation Control Building - Weber