



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: HEARING TO CONSIDER AND MAKE FINDINGS ON APPLICATION P20-01149 FOR REHABILITATION OF THE BIXLER VAPOR DRY CLEANING COMPANY BUILDING (HP #313) LOCATED AT 2049 BROADWAY PURSUANT TO FMC 12-1606(a)(2) AND 12-1617(h)(1) AND RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Exhibit A: State of California Survey Forms for the Bixler Vapor Dry Cleaning Company Building 2049 Broadway Prepared May 7, 2019 by Laura Groves van Onna for the City of Fresno, 2. Exhibit B: Historic Review Application Submittal from the owners of the Bixler Vapor Dry Cleaning Company Building (HP #313) located at 2049 Broadway, May 2020, 3. Exhibit C: Environmental Assessment No. P20-01149 dated July 20, 2020

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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REPORT TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

July 27, 2020

FROM: MIKE SANCHEZ, AICP, MCRP
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SUBJECT

HEARING TO CONSIDER AND MAKE FINDINGS ON APPLICATION P20-01149 FOR REHABILITATION OF THE BIXLER VAPOR DRY CLEANING COMPANY BUILDING (HP #313) LOCATED AT 2049 BROADWAY PURSUANT TO FMC 12-1606(a)(2) AND 12-1617(h)(1) AND RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission take the following actions:

1. APPROVE Application P20-01149 for rehabilitation, including exterior alterations visible from the public right-of-way, of the Bixler Vapor Dry Cleaning Company Building (HP #313) located at

2049 Broadway pursuant to FMC 12-1606(a)(2) and make a finding that FMC 12-1617(h)(1) applies for the project with the following conditions:

- a. Staff will be allowed to photograph before, during and upon completion of the project; and,
- b. Any changes to the approved project will be submitted to the Historic Preservation Specialist prior to the commencement of any related work.

2. CONSIDER Environmental Assessment No. P20-01149, a Categorical Exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15331/Class 31 (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) and Section 15332/Class 32 (In-fill Development) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The owners of the Bixler Vapor Dry Cleaning Company Building have requested that Application P20-01149 for rehabilitation be considered for Historic Review. Because this project proposal is a substantial alteration to a Historic Resource visible from the public right-of-way, it requires review by the Historic Preservation Commission. The applicant submitted a Pre-Application, consisting of conceptual rehabilitation plans, in May 2019. The Commission provided review and comment on these conceptual plans at their meeting on May 20, 2019. Primary concerns for Staff are the street-facing façades of this building, as they consist of the character-defining features of this historic resource. Pursuant to FMC 12-1606(a)(2) and 12-1617, Staff requests that the Commission consider and make findings on Application P20-01149.

BACKGROUND

The Bixler Vapor Dry Cleaning Company Building (1920) consists of a three-story commercial/industrial building, constructed of brick, in the Lowell Neighborhood. A one-story caretaker's studio was constructed within the rear portion of the rooftop of the building in 1940. The period of significance identified for this property is 1920-1956, the estimated period during which the Bixler Vapor Dry Cleaning Company owned and operated the Building.

Local Register of Historic Resources

The Bixler Vapor Dry Cleaning Company Building was designated as a Historic Resource to the Local Register of Historic Resources by Fresno City Council on June 27, 2019. The Building is greater than 50 years of age and possesses integrity of location, design, feeling, and association (FMC 12-1607). Additionally, it is significant under Local Register Criterion i because it is associated with early 20th century commercial and industrial development in the Lowell Neighborhood in Fresno and Criterion iii because it has distinction as an Industrial - Industrial Loft property type.

Current Application

The owners of the Bixler Vapor Dry Cleaning Company Building have requested that Application P20-01149 for rehabilitation be considered for Historic Review. Because this project proposal is a substantial alteration visible from the public right-of-way, it requires review by the Historic Preservation Commission pursuant to Fresno Municipal Code sections 12-1606(a)(2) and 12-1617 (h). The applicant submitted a Pre-Application, consisting of conceptual rehabilitation plans, in May 2019. The Commission provided review and comment on these conceptual plans on May 20, 2019.

The rehabilitation plans entail a program for the building that includes ground floor commercial use and upper story residential use. Work taking place on the exterior essentially consists of exterior paint and stucco refinish; the replacement of storefronts and upper story windows within the existing framework of openings on elevations facing Broadway, Divisadero Street, and E Voorman Avenue with floor-to-ceiling windows, each set vertically framed by dark bronze metal and topped by a dark bronze metal header; the installation of a metal-framed awning that spans the width of the façade above the storefronts that is infilled with glass and that inclines upwards away from the building with support by cables; and a rear/rooftop addition with metal cladding and anodized aluminum storefront and upper story windows. The plans also depict a conceptual blade sign, which will be submitted for review under a separate permit application. These rehabilitation plans are being proposed by the applicant for tenant improvement purposes.

Standards

Upon initial review of Application P20-01149 for the Bixler Vapor Dry Cleaning Company Building, Staff finds that the project, as proposed, appears to be in accordance with applicable standards 1, 9, and 10 of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*:

Standard 1

A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.

Staff finds that the street-facing façades of this building are the primary concerns as they consist of the character-defining features of this historic resource. Although this building was originally used for commercial/industrial purposes, the upper stories have been utilized for residential purposes for over 40 years; residential use does not entail change to the building's distinctive design and materials.

Standard 9

New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

For the current application, the replacement of the substantially altered and deteriorated storefronts and upper story windows will take place within the existing framework of openings on street-facing elevations, with compatible design and materials that minimize potential adverse effects.

Standard 10

New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

For the proposed project, the rear/rooftop addition offers a new uniform structure to the existing additions on the rear and rooftop portions of the building, that is differentiated from the old and that does not detract from the overall historic character of the property. If any proposed exterior alterations or additions were removed in future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be unimpaired. The rehabilitation plans as currently proposed appear to be consistent with, and enhanced from, the conceptual plans submitted and commented upon by the Commission

in May 2019. The proposed rehabilitation at the Bixler Vapor Dry Cleaning Company Building will retain and enhance the historic integrity of the property.

Therefore, Staff recommends approval with conditions based upon findings that the proposed rehabilitation meets applicable standards 1, 9, and 10 of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

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. Section 1606(a)(2) specifically refers to the duties entailing review of alterations to 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.

Section 1617 outlines the Historic Resource Permit Review Process.

Section 1617(h) provides that: "No application or proposal shall be approved or approved with modifications unless the Commission makes the following findings:

- (1) The proposed work is found to be consistent with the purposes of this article and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, not detrimental to the special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value of the Historic Resource; or
- (2) The action proposed is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property; or
- (3) Denial of the application will result in unreasonable economic hardship to the owner. In order to approve the applicant, the Commission must find facts and circumstances, not the applicant's own making, which establish that there are no feasible measures that can be taken that will enable the property owner to make a reasonable economic beneficial use of the property or derive a reasonable economic return from the property in its current form; or
- (4) The site is required for a public use which will directly benefit the public health, safety and welfare and will be of more benefit than the Historic Resource.
- (5) For applications for relocation of a Historic Resource, the Commission shall find that one or more of the above conditions exist, that relocation will not destroy the historical, architectural or aesthetic value of the Resource and that the relocation is part of a definitive series of actions which will assure the preservation of the Resource."

For the proposed project, Staff recommends that the Commission find that Section 1617(h)(1) applies as the plans are consistent with the purposes of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and also are not detrimental to the special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value of the Building.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

Environmental review is required by Fresno Municipal Code Section 12-1617(c) as “No hearing shall be held by the Commission for applicant or proposals to demolish, grade, remove or substantially alter the Historic Resource until such application or proposal has undergone environmental review in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act.” If the Commission finds that the proposed plans for the Building appear to be consistent with Rehabilitation Treatment protocol of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards then the project can utilize a Categorical Exemption Class 31 which includes: “projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties...” as well as a Class 32 exemption for in-fill development. Further, none of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines 15300.2 apply to this project.

Historic Review Application Submittal Check List

The Submittal Check List for the Historic Review Application 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
- ☐ Construction Documents
 - An existing site plan (and a proposed site plan if different from existing), drawn to scale, which clearly indicates all structures located on the parcel; and, the parcel’s North, South, East, and West property lines
 - Detailed drawings, visuals, and descriptions for the proposed work

Attachments:

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