



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: HEARING TO CONSIDER the proposed new security fencing at the Old Fresno Water Tower located at 2444 Fresno St.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) take the following actions:

1. ADOPT a finding of Categorical Exemption pursuant to Sections 15331/Class 31 of the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines
2. APPROVE: Application P22-02936 for the installation of fencing at the Old Fresno Water Tower HP#001 located at 2444 Fresno Street. (466-09-301T & a portion of 466-09-305T) with conditions.

Sponsors: General Services Department

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Exhibit A - HPC Staff Report [6-28-99], 2. Exhibit B - Site Plan, 3. Exhibit C - Operational Statement, 4. Exhibit D - Fresno Municipal Code Findings, 5. Exhibit E - SOI standards, 6. Exhibit F - P22-02936 Environmental Assessment [08-22-22]

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
3/27/2023	1	Historic Preservation Commission	APPROVED	Pass

REPORT TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

March 27, 2023

FROM: JENNIFER CLARK, Director
Planning and Development Department

SUBJECT

HEARING TO CONSIDER the proposed new security fencing at the Old Fresno Water Tower located at 2444 Fresno St.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) take the following actions:

1. **ADOPT** a finding of Categorical Exemption pursuant to Sections 15331/Class 31 of the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines

- 2. APPROVE:** Application P22-02936 for the installation of fencing at the Old Fresno Water Tower HP#001 located at 2444 Fresno Street. (466-09-301T & a portion of 466-09-305T) with conditions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 22, 2022, the Commission considered exterior modifications to HP#1, the Old Fresno Water Tower. All but the security fence materials were approved pending submittals. The Architectural subcommittee has reviewed and recommended for approval a black wrought iron fencing with alternating straight and curved pickets with decorative knuckle features.

BACKGROUND

Old Fresno Water Tower (HP#001)

Old Fresno Water Tower (1894)

2444 Fresno Street

George Washington Maher, Architect

American Romanesque

George Washington Maher, a Chicago architect, was commissioned to design Fresno's water tower in 1891. Completed in 1894, it was in constant use until 1963, when the pumping machinery was no longer adequate. The original design called for a library on the second and third floors, but it was never installed. For several years, the first floor was used as a parking meter repair facility.

In 2001 the second floor was removed, and the interior of the tower remodeled to become the visitors' center for the City and County of Fresno. As part of this remodeling a landscaped plaza and separate restroom building were built adjacent to the tower. The water tower today remains Fresno's most distinctive and enduring architectural symbol.

On August 22, 2022, the Commission considered exterior modifications to HP#1, the Old Fresno Water Tower. The Commission approved the application apart from the installation of site perimeter security fencing and that the final design return to the Commission for approval. The Architectural subcommittee has reviewed and recommended for approval a black wrought iron fencing with alternating straight and curved pickets with decorative knuckle features.

Project Analysis

Perimeter security fencing is proposed to encircle the entire site. Previously the Commission has reviewed and provided feedback on several proposals to install fencing around the plaza with attachments to the Resource itself. Based on feedback from the Commission, this application proposes not to attach to the Old Fresno Water Tower directly but to protect the site in its entirety. The updated proposal identifies the type and style of fencing materials. Installation of a fence will have a direct visual and physical impact to the site; however, it will correct an unsafe condition and protect the site itself from vandalism and damage which is an economic hardship and liability to the owner.

Notice of Historic Preservation Commission Hearing

In accordance with Section 12-1617 of the FMC, the Planning and Development Department mailed notices of this Commission hearing to surrounding property owners within 2,000 feet.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

Section 15331 is applicable because the proposed project will not permanently alter any historic or character defining features of the building. Additionally, the project is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standard for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The proposed project is not expected to have a significant effect on the environment and therefore is categorically exempt and should be adopted. Further, none of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines 15300.2 apply to this project

FRESNO MUNICIPAL CODE FINDINGS

Based upon analysis of the application, the required findings by the Historic Preservation Commission to approve application permit P22-02936 FMC Section 12-1617 (h) are as follows:

- Staff finds that **FINDING 1** can be made for the installation of a perimeter security fence as long as the historic character of the property will not be impacted by the fencing.
- Staff finds that **FINDING 2** can be made for the site security fencing as this is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property.
- Staff finds that **FINDING 3** can be made for the site security fencing as it is necessary to prevent unreasonable economic hardship to the owner.
- Staff finds that **FINDING 4** can be made for the site security fencing as it is necessary for the public health, safety and welfare and will be of more benefit than the effect to the Historic Resource.
- **FINDING 5** is not applicable because this is not an application for relocation of an Historic Resource

CONCLUSION

Based upon analysis of the application, staff recommends approval of Application P22-02936 for the materials, form, and installation at the Old Fresno Water Tower HP#001 located at 2444 Fresno St. (466-09-301T & a portion of 466-09-305T) with conditions with the following conditions:

- a. All materials and form will be as described in the application submittal; and
- b. Any changes to the approved project will be submitted to the Historic Preservation Specialist prior to the commencement of any related work.

Attachments:

Exhibit A - HPC Staff Report [6-28-99]

Exhibit B - Site Plan

Exhibit C - Operational Statement

Exhibit D - Fresno Municipal Code Findings

Exhibit E - SOI standards

Exhibit F - P22-02936 Environmental Assessment [08-22-22]