

City of Isleton
Isleton Historic Review Board
Staff Report

DATE: November 16, 2022

ITEM#: 4.A

CATEGORY: New Business

ISLETON WATER TOWER, HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION

411 Union Street

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

California American Water Company (CalAm) has advised the City that they are planning to remove the Isleton Water Tower sometime in 2024 (see Exhibit B, Correspondence with California Water Company). At its September 27, 2022, regular meeting, the City Council directed staff to evaluate the feasibility of designating the tower as a Landmark through the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. As shown in Exhibit A, photos of the tower, a water tower structure has been located at the site for more than 50 years and it appears to qualify to be designated as a landmark under the provisions of the regulations. The first step in designating the tower under the provisions of the regulations to have the Historic Preservation Board consider staff's recommendations and recommend to the City Council the designation.

PROJECT SITE SETTING

The property a small, approximately 3,000 square foot parcel (411 Union Street, Assessor's Parcel 157-0026-003) located on the north side of Union Street next to the City's parking lot at the northwest corner of Union and E Streets (see Exhibit A). It is a flat site that is fully built out with the water tower and support facilities. The site is surrounded by a public parking lot to the east, vacant land to the north, houses to the west, and an elementary school to the south, across Union Street. It is situated on the upper north section of town where it is visually prevalent from all locations of the City and from the highway.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Historic Preservation Regulation

Criteria for Landmark Designation: Under the Historic Preservation Regulations, criteria for designation of landmarks and districts in the City the following should be consider

1. It reflects interest or value as part of the heritage of the city.
Analysis: Although staff was unable to find specific dates of installation, based on photo documentation, a water tower structure on this particular site has been around for more than 50 years and has become a visual icon for the City. Actual dates of installation could not be confirmed, but the first structure appears to have been constructed in the 1940s and replaced by a newer tower structure in the 1990s.
2. It contains outstanding or exemplary elements of attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship of a particular historic period.
Analysis: Due to its height, location, and visual prominence, the tower has a visual character that exemplifies the City's heritage as a symbol for Isleton.
3. It is in a unique location or contains one or more physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood.

Analysis: The tower is in a central location in Isleton, both near the downtown and near the east entrance into Isleton from the Highway, welcoming visitors to the City. It represents an established familiar visual feature of the town and it's the only elevated water town structure in Isleton.

Procedure for Landmark Designation: Designating the tower as a landmark requires a recommendation by the Historic Preservation Board to the City Council. Upon initiation by staff and recommendation by the Board, a public hearing is required for the City Council to consider and take final action to designate the tower as a landmark.

Record of Landmark Designation: As provided under Section 1.01 (d), the Board should assemble and add the water tower in the list of landmarks in the City after the City Council approves designation.

Public Outreach/Staff/Agency/Public Review: The project was reviewed by City staff, including the City Manager/City Engineer and Fire Chief to provide technical evaluation and to consider these provisions of the code. The City is also working with CalAm, the current owners of the property, to purchase the tower and retain it for the community.

RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Board should review this request of staff and recommend (with letter from the Board Chair) to the City Council designation of the water tower as a landmark in accordance with Section 1.06 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance based on the following finding:

Finding of Landmark Designation:

In accordance with Section 1.06 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance the Historic Preservation Board hereby recommends that the City Council determine that the existing Isleton Water Tower, located at 411 Union Street is a landmark based on the following criteria and findings:

- a. The tower reflects interest or value as part of the heritage of the city.
In that it (and/or similar structure on the same site) has been around for more than 50 years and has become a visual icon for the City.
- b. The tower contains outstanding or exemplary elements of attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship of a particular historic period in that its height, location, and design, the tower has a visual character that exemplifies the City's heritage as a symbol for Isleton.
- c. The tower is in a unique location and contains physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood in that it is located in a central location in Isleton both near the downtown and near the east entrance into Isleton from the Highway, welcoming visitors to the City. The tower also represents an established familiar visual feature of the town and it's the only elevated water tower structure in Isleton.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit A-Map and Photos of Water Tower
2. Exhibit B-Correspondence with California American Water Co.
3. Exhibit C- September 27, 2022, City Council Meeting Staff Report
4. Exhibit D-City of Isleton Historic Preservation Ordinance

Prepared by: Gary Price, Price Consulting
Reviewed by: Charles Bergson, City Manager
Submitted by: Yvonne Zepeda, Deputy City Clerk

Exhibit A – Maps and Photos of Water Tower

Figure 1-Location Map



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Figure 2-Recent Photos of Water Tower

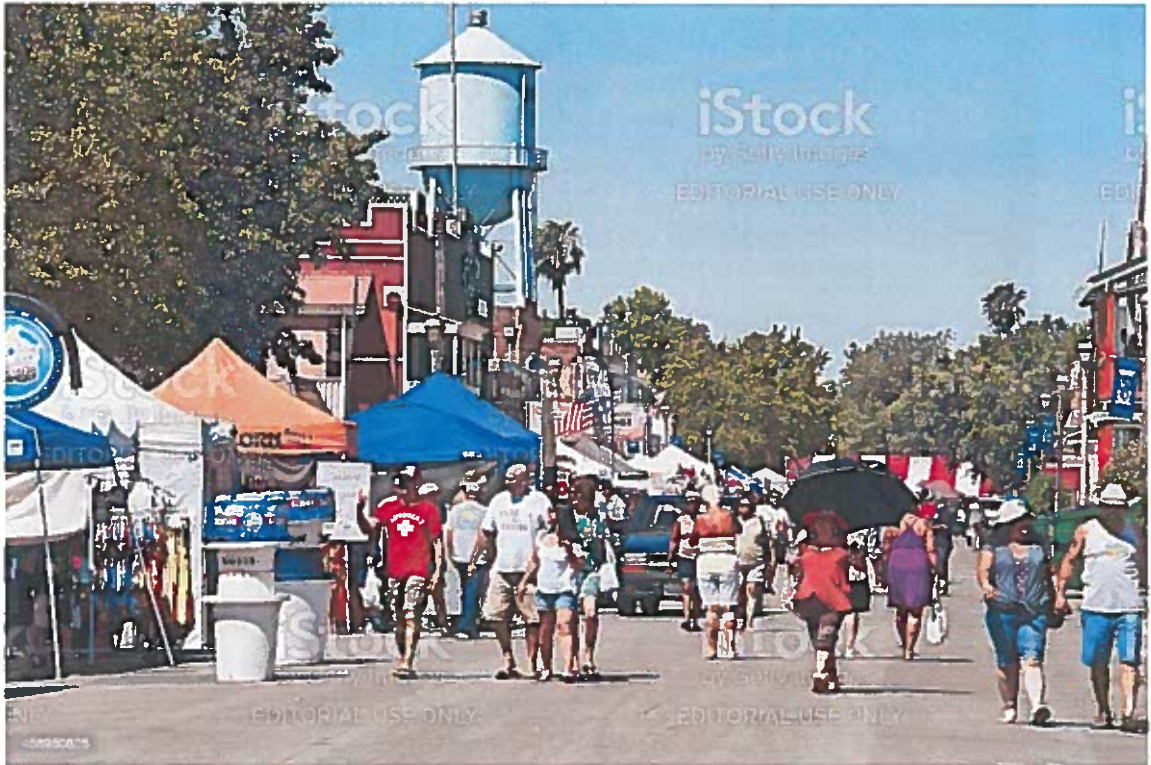
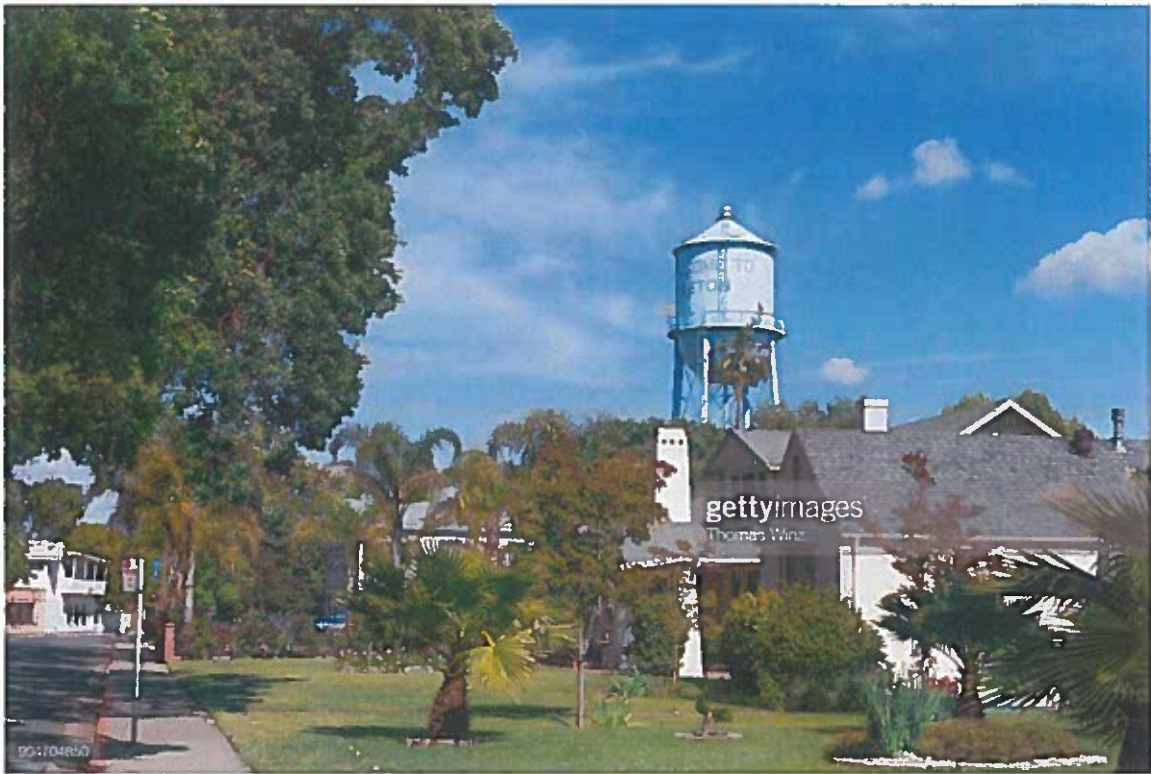


Figure 3-Historic Photo of Water Tower

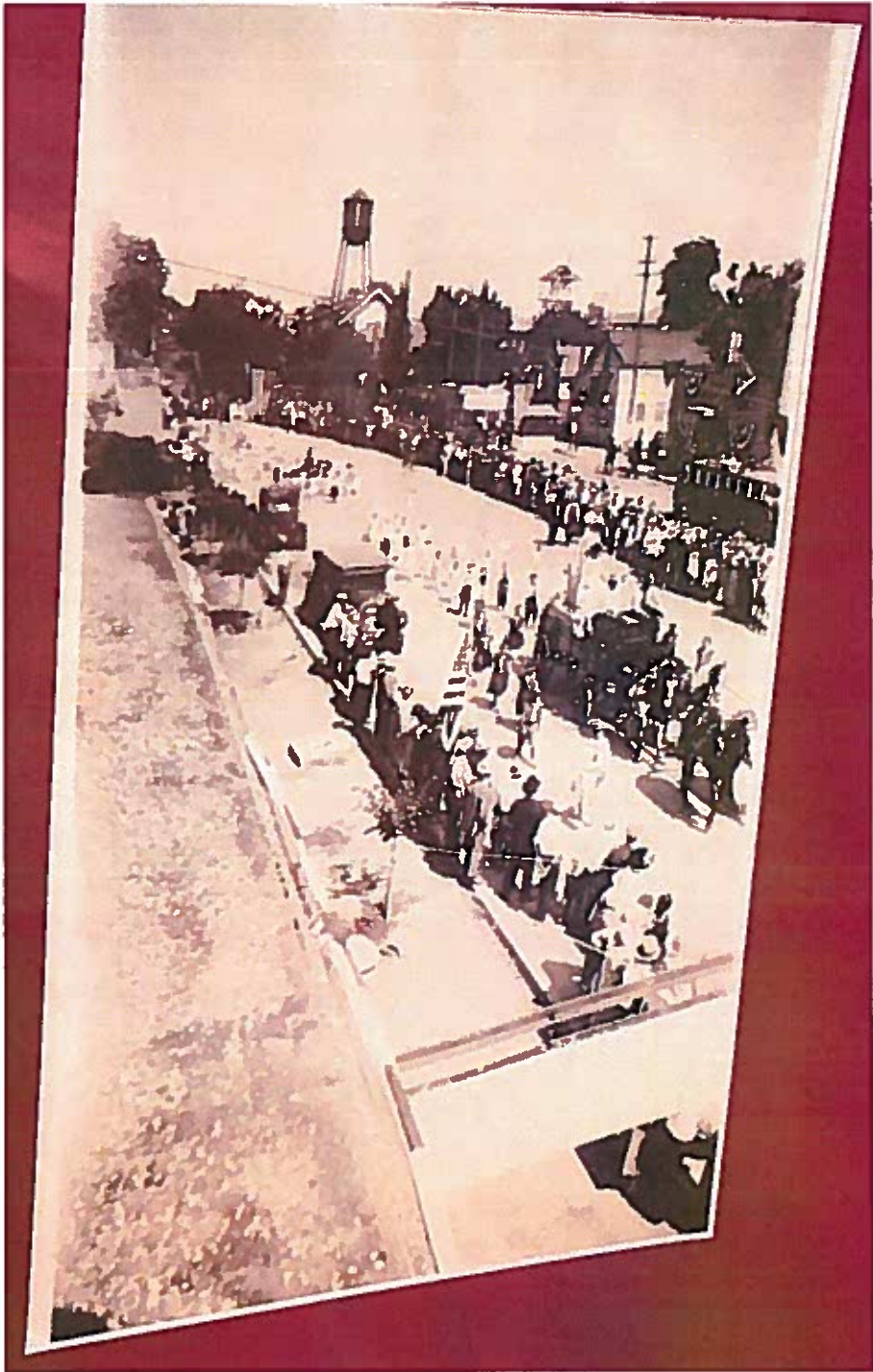


Exhibit B – Correspondence with California American Water Company

Email Correspondence:

From: Nichole Baxter [<mailto:Nichole.Baxter@amwater.com>]
Sent: Thursday, July 14, 2022 11:00
To: cbergson@cityofisleton.com
Cc: Audie Foster <Audie.Foster@amwater.com>; Evan J Jacobs <Evan.Jacobs@amwater.com>
Subject: Follow Up to Our Call

Hi Charles,

Here's a summary of our phone call today. I am CC'ing in Audie as well, who may follow up with more information and is available to talk to Mr. Herr from Cal.net directly.

I received your letter regarding Cal.net's request to place their equipment on our water tower. I mentioned the letter was dated June 5, but that I didn't receive it till the week of July 10 (you shared the date on the letter was a typo). Previous to your letter, we received a call from one of Cal.net's salespeople, and we responded to them directly.

As we told Cal.net, unfortunately, it is just not a good time to be looking into adding any third-party equipment to the tower. We're currently looking to invest in a new ground level storage tank for your system. We've budgeted a sizeable investment for Isleton water storage in our current general rate case, and this would mean decommissioning the water tower. When weighing the options for providing more water storage to meet DDW standards and the needs of the community, it makes much more sense to install a new, larger ground storage tank versus updating the water tower, which would be costly and not as efficient.

That means that placing Cal.net's equipment up there is not a long-term, smart solution for providing internet to the community. We do have land near our existing treatment plant that might work for Cal.net to lease or purchase and build their own tower, which would be a more permanent solution, and likely better for your residents in the long run. We'd love to talk this option through with Mr. Herr directly, if you could refer him to Audie at 916-568-4259 or audie.foster@amwater.com.

You also shared that the tower is of huge importance to the community, as an icon and for placemaking, and you brought up interest in exploring options to have the city buy the tower from us when it is decommissioned. You shared that you've worked in other communities that kept empty water towers for identity purposes and also see value in the tower's height. I explained briefly that the process of the city purchasing the tower could be very complicated and you said you would like

to discuss the tower's future more as soon as possible. We agreed to set up a separate meeting to discuss options and share more information, separate from Cal.net's inquiry, to include a larger team.

Please look for a follow up email with meeting information after I get availability/more information from our team.

Best,

Nichole Baxter
She/Her

External Affairs, Northern California
California American Water
4701 Beloit Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95838

City of Isleton

City Council
Staff Report

DATE: September 27, 2022

ITEM#: 8.D

CATEGORY: New Business

ISLETON WATER TOWER, HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION

SUMMARY

California American Water Company (CalAm) has advised the City that they are planning to remove the Isleton Water Tower. At its last meeting the City Council directed that Staff investigate designating this Tower a Historic Landmark.

DISCUSSION

CalAm has indicated that due to safety and seismic considerations, they want to remove the Isleton Water Tower. CalAm has proposed selling the Tower to the City and their proposal is pending. The public and City have express concerns about the Tower and its historical, commercial and cultural significance to the City. The Tower is a reference point for those traveling and visiting the Delta and is often used moniker for businesses and organizations in the City.

City ordinance 05-2011, Historic Preservation, provides for the designation of historical landmarks (attached – sec 1.06).

Some of the criteria set in the ordinance for a landmark include:

- Property must be found to have historical or cultural interest or special character to the public.
- Reflects interest or value a part of the heritage of the city,
- Contains outstanding or exemplary elements of attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship of a particular historic period,
- Is in a unique location,

The Isleton Water Tower reflects all these criteria. Staff is requesting that the Council approve the Staff request to designate the Isleton Water Tower as an Isleton Historic Landmark. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Isleton Historic Review Board.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council approve the designation of the Isleton Water Tower as an Isleton Historic Landmark.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. City Ordinance 05-2011, An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Isleton Adopting a Historic Preservation Ordinance and Accompany Negative Declaration.

Prepared by: Charles Bergson, City Manager

Submitted by: Yvonne Zepeda, Deputy City Clerk

Exhibit D – City of Isleton Historic Preservation Ordinance

ORDINANCE NO. 05-2011

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF ISLETON ADOPTING A HISTORIC
PRESERVATION ORDINANCE AND ACCOMPANYING
NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

WHEREAS, in December 2009 the Isleton Historic Preservation Stakeholder Committee was formed to help develop historical preservation goals for the city;

WHEREAS, the committee met every month for more than a year;

WHEREAS, the committee has developed policies and objectives to advance the historical interests of the city;

WHEREAS, this ordinance establishes procedures and regulations to identify, preserve, designate, and maintain historic resources;

WHEREAS, the California Environmental Quality Act is being complied with through use of a categorical exemption (CEQA Guideline § 154308); and

WHEREAS, having reviewed this ordinance on April 12, 2011 the Isleton Planning Commission is recommending City Council approval;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Isleton City Council does ordain as follows:

Section 1. The Historic Preservation Ordinance is adopted to read in its entirety as follows:

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Sections:

- 1.01 Purpose
- 1.03 Establishment of Historic Review Board
- 1.06 Designation of Historic Landmarks and Districts
- 1.09 Certificates of Appropriateness
- 1.12 Certificates of Hardship
- 1.15 Appeals
- 1.18. Duty to Maintain
- 1.21 Unsafe or Dangerous Conditions
- 1.23 Penalties

1.01 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to promote the public health, safety, and welfare by providing for the identification, protection, enhancement and perpetuation of such things as buildings, structures, signs, features and sites within the city, that reflect the city's historical, architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage. The way this chapter has accomplished this is by establishing a historic review board which: (i) makes recommendations to the city council concerning the designation of historic landmarks and districts; (ii) oversees the issuance of certificates of appropriateness which are required in order to make specified changes to historic landmarks and districts; and (iii) makes recommendations to the city council concerning the issuance of hardship certificates which are available under specified circumstances to allow an owner to be relieved from the strict application of this chapter. City council is sensitive to the competing needs of preserving its heritage as provided herein while at the same time avoiding unnecessary regulation of private property. Accordingly, city council has directed the board to distinguish between "minor" and "major" repairs, modifications, alterations and construction as the board develops its operating rules and regulations, which rules and regulations shall be reviewed and adopted by city council resolution and bound in an operational manual together with adopted policies for easy counter reference.

1.03 Establishment of Historic Review Board

A. Establishment of historic review board

The Isleton Historic Review Board is established to promote the goals and objectives of this chapter through exercise of its powers and duties which are outlined below.

B. Composition of the historic review board

The board shall consist of five members as follows: (1) one historical society board member; (2) two public members; and (3) two planning commissioners. The historical society board member shall be selected by the historical society board, the public members shall be appointed by city council; and the planning commission members shall be selected by the planning commission, all subject to city council confirmation.

C. Term, officers and rules

Except as otherwise provided, each board member shall serve at the pleasure of the city council until his or her successor is seated. No member shall serve more than eight consecutive years.

1. Vacancies shall be filled by majority vote of the city council.
2. The term of a member who has been absent for three consecutive meetings without prior board approval, shall automatically terminate.

3. The board shall elect a chair and vice-chair, who shall each hold office for up to two years.

4. The chair and vice-chair shall be elected at the first board meeting after July 1st of each year or as soon there after as possible.

5. The board shall adopt its own operating rules, regulations and policies, and shall designate the time and place for its meetings.

D. Powers and duties of board

1. The board shall:

a. maintain a list of possible landmarks and districts which may merit official historic recognition;

b. investigate and report to the city council on the use of various federal, state, local, and private funding sources;

c. be available to advise people concerning the goals and objectives of this chapter as they relate to proposed work on architectural historical or cultural resources in the community. Examples of such work include exterior painting, roofing, fencing, landscaping, glazing, and installation of light fixtures; and

d. encourage public awareness, understanding and involvement concerning the unique historical, architectural and environmental heritage of the city through educational and interpretative programs.

2. The board shall also:

a. make recommendations to the city council concerning the its designation of historic landmarks and districts which city council is hereby authorized to designate as provided herein;

b. review applications for certificates of appropriateness as follows:

(1) the board shall review applications asking for permission to demolish structures, and recommend to city council whether and under what circumstances a certificate should issue;

(2) the board shall review and rule on applications asking permission to move, alter or construct structures, as well as all other 'major' proposals; and

(2) The board shall review all other applications for certificates of appropriateness to determine whether the board or the building official should rule on them.

c. review applications for certificates of hardship and recommend to the city council whether and under what circumstances such a certificate should issue.

3. The board shall have all other powers which are incidental and necessary to carry out its enumerated powers and duties.

1.06 Designation of Historic Landmarks and Districts

A. Procedure for designation of historic landmarks and districts

1. The development and amendment of the city's list of historic landmarks and districts may be initiated:

- a. at the recommendation of staff;
- b. by recommendation of the board ; or
- c. by application of the property owner.

2. Upon initiation, the board shall review the request and make a recommendation to be considered at a public hearing before the city council, which will make the final decision concerning adoption or amendment of the list.

3. The city council hearing shall be noticed as follows in addition to the extent otherwise required by law:

a. in the case of a historic landmark, notice of the hearing shall be given to the owners and occupants (if any) of the historic landmark and advertised in a newspaper of general circulation at least ten days prior to the public hearing;

b. in the case of a historic district, notice of the hearing shall be given to the applicants and owners of all properties within the proposed historic district and advertised in a newspaper of general circulation at least ten days prior to the public hearing;

c. at the conclusion of the public hearing city council shall make a decision supported by written findings; and

d. if city council makes a designation, the city clerk will forthwith cause to be recorded notice that such property has been designated and

placed on the city's register of historic landmarks and districts and said notice shall state that the designation runs with the land.

B. Criteria for designation of landmarks and districts

1. In designating a landmark or district as being of historical or cultural significance and worthy of protection under this chapter, the property must be found to have historical or cultural interest or special character to the public.

2. The criteria to be used is that the place, site, building, structure, object, or improvement possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship; and meets one or more of the following:

a. the proposed landmark or district reflects interest or value as part of the heritage of the city;

b. the proposed landmark or district was the location of a significant historic event;

c. the proposed landmark or district identifies with a person(s) who significantly contributed to the history and development of the city; or whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state or country;

d. the proposed landmark or district contains outstanding or exemplary elements of attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship of a particular historic period;

e. the proposed landmark or district is in a unique location or contains one or more physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood;

f. the proposed landmark or district is a source, site or repository of archeological interest; or

g. the proposed resource or district contains a natural setting that strongly contributes to the well being of the people of the city.

C. Additional criteria for districts

Where the designation of an historic district is being considered, the following additional criteria will be considered:

1. whether it is a geographically definable area, urban or rural, possessing a significant concentration of objects, sites or structures unified by past events, or aesthetically by plan of development; or

2. Whether the collective value of the area is greater than the value of each individual component.

D. Automatic designations

Any property listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historic Resources will automatically be designated as a local historic landmark, and any neighborhood so designated will automatically be designated as a local historic district. Any property identified as a contributing structure (e.g. one that enhances the historical nature of the area) to a district so listed will also be considered a contributing structure to the local historic district.

E. Findings for deletion of historic landmarks or historic districts

The deletion of any designated historic landmark or district may be approved only if city council first finds that the historic landmark or district no longer qualifies as such based on the criteria in section 1.06 B or is otherwise entitled to a certificate of hardship.

1.09 Certificates of Appropriateness

A. When certificates of appropriateness are required

Except as provided herein, the following activities are only allowed after the city has issued a certificate of appropriateness:

1. Exterior alterations (e.g. exterior painting, roofing, fencing, landscaping, glazing, and installation of light fixtures) to a designated historic landmark;
2. New construction on the site of a designated historic landmark;
3. moving of a historic landmark;
4. a lot split or subdivision of a historic landmark;
5. The erection or relocation of a sign in a historic district; and
6. New construction on property in a historic district.

B. Applying for a certificate of appropriateness

Applications shall be made on a form prescribed by the building official and shall be accompanied by a fee set by resolution of the city council. The application shall include information required by the building official including

elevation drawings, proposed colors and materials, plan view of new construction, and color photographs of all sides of all existing onsite structures.

C. Processing of a certificate of appropriateness

1. The building official will use a “preservation check list” to determine if a proposal is “minor” or “major,” and shall use design guidelines to determine if the proposal is compatible with the existing surroundings. All requests for new construction, subdivision, lot splits, demolition, or moving of a historic landmark shall be considered a major alteration. Applications for a certificate of appropriateness for major alterations, except demolition, shall be reviewed by the board. A certificate for demolition shall be reviewed by city council.

2. A certificate of appropriateness for minor improvements may be approved by the building official unless otherwise determined by the board.

3. The building official shall inform the board in writing of all decisions made regarding minor alterations within ten calendar days thereafter.

4. To approve an application, the proposed activity must be found to be consistent with this chapter and with the Secretary of Interior’s standards and not detrimental to a historic landmark or district.

5. The board’s decision will be supported by written findings.

6. A certificate of appropriateness shall become void unless construction is commenced and diligently pursued within eighteen months of the date of issuance. Certificates of appropriateness may be renewed for up to thirty-six-months through the building official.

D. Additional criteria for moving a historic landmark or structure

Approval of a certificate of appropriateness for the moving of a historic landmark or structure in a designated historic district may only be granted if, in addition to the above, the board determines that:

1. The moving will not have a significant negative effect on the applicable goals and objectives of this chapter; and

2. The structure in its original setting is not of such interest or quality that it would reasonably meet federal or state criteria for designation as a historic landmark.

E. Additional criteria for demolishing a historic landmark or structure

Approval of a certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of a historic landmark or structure in a designated historic district may only be granted if, in addition to the above, the board determines that:

1. The demolition will not have a significant negative effect on the applicable goals and objectives of this ordinance;
2. The structure is not of such unusual design, texture or materials that it cannot be reproduced or can only be reproduced with great difficulty and expense;
3. The structure is not of such interest or quality that it would reasonably meet federal or state criteria for designation as a historic landmark; and
4. Conversion to a new use, rehabilitation and preservation are unfeasible.

F. Demolition mitigation measures

Prior to the issuance of a certificate allowing demolition the following mitigation measures in addition to any others required by law shall be completed by the applicant:

1. Each historic structure shall be documented as follows:
 - a. plans shall be prepared which include a site plan, floor plans, elevations, and detailed drawings of character defining features such as moldings, light fixtures, trim patterns and stairs, and given to the city for preservation; and
 - b. photographs shall be taken which include the exterior and interior of the structure, along with interior and exterior character defining features, and given to the city for preservation.
2. In an effort to preserve features and artifacts from historic structures, a determination whether items within or on the building should be salvaged will be made by the city prior to the issuance of a demolition permit.

1.12 Certificates of Hardship

A certificate of hardship permitting demolition, moving, subdivision, or a lot split, new construction, or alteration, etc., for which a certificate of appropriateness has been refused, may be granted by the city council under the conditions described below. Application shall be made in the form required by the building official, and the same procedure required for a certificate of appropriateness shall be followed. A certificate of hardship may only be granted if the city finds:

1. Reasonable use or return on the property is not likely; and

2. Alternative plans in keeping with this chapter are infeasible.

1.15 Appeals

A. Appeal of building official's decision

Any two members of the board or a member of the public may appeal a decision of the building official made pursuant to this chapter within five calendar days thereafter. The appeal must be in writing, explain the basis and be delivered to the city clerk within that time.

B. Appeal of board decision

Any member of the city council or of the public may appeal a decision of the board made pursuant to this chapter within five calendar days thereafter. The appeal must be in writing, explain the basis and be delivered to the city clerk within that time.

C. Stay of approval

All approvals shall be stayed pending the outcome of an appeal.

1.18 Duty to Maintain

The owner, or other person in charge of a Historical Landmark or a contributing structure in a Historic District has a duty to keep in good repair all of the exterior features of such Landmark, and all interior features thereof which, if not maintained, may cause or tend to cause the exterior features of such resource to deteriorate, decay become damaged or fall into a state of disrepair.

1.21 Unsafe or Dangerous Conditions

Nothing in this chapter shall be interpreted to prohibit the construction, alteration, restoration, demolition, or relocation of any historical resource if such would jeopardize public safety or result in an unsafe or dangerous condition which cannot be satisfactorily rectified in the professional opinion of the building official.

1.23 Penalties

A. Misdemeanor

Violation of any provision in this chapter shall constitute a misdemeanor.

B. Nuisance

The unauthorized alteration or demolition of a historical landmark in violation of this chapter is expressly declared to be a nuisance and shall be abated by restoring or reconstructing the property to its condition prior to the violation.

C. Civil penalties

Any person or entity which demolishes or substantially alters or causes substantial alteration or demolition of a structure, in violation of the provisions of this chapter, shall be liable for a civil penalty. In the case of demolition, the civil penalty shall be one-half the assessed value of the landmark or structure prior to demolition. In the case of alteration, the civil penalty shall be one-half the cost of restoration of the altered portion of the landmark or structure.

D. Moratorium

Alteration or demolition of a landmark or structure in violation of this chapter shall authorize the city to issue a temporary moratorium for the development of the subject property for a period not to exceed twenty-four (24) months from the date the city becomes aware of the unauthorized alteration or demolition. The purpose of the moratorium is to provide the city an opportunity to study and determine appropriate mitigation measures for the alteration or removal of the landmark or structure, and to ensure measures are incorporated into any future development plans and approvals for the subject property.

Circulation of November 16, 2022 Historic Preservation Board Agenda Package to:

ISLETON HISTORICAL PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD:

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