

National Aeronautics and Space Administration



Ames Research Center
Moffett Field, California 94035

January 25, 2024

Ms. Julianne Polanco
State Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Historic Preservation
Department of Parks & Recreation
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95816

Attn: Mr. Mark Beason

Subject: Section 106 Consultation for the Moffett Federal Airfield (MFA) 115kV Main Substation Refurbishment Project at Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, Santa Clara County, California

Dear Ms. Polanco:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Ames Research Center (ARC) requests Section 106 consultation on the proposed (MFA) 115kV Main Substation (Building 591) Refurbishment Project (project or undertaking) at ARC, Moffett Field, Santa Clara County, California. The project area is located within the eligible expanded boundary of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-listed Naval Air Station (NAS) Sunnyvale Historic District. As the lead Federal agency, NASA ARC has determined that this project constitutes an undertaking under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (54 United States Code §306108), as amended.

The project proponent retained AECOM to conduct a technical study for this project. The study was conducted by cultural resources professional who meet the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualifications standards (48 Federal Register 44738). The technical memo prepared by AECOM, dated January 25, 2024, which includes a description of the undertaking, the Area of Potential Effects (APE), identification efforts, and an assessment of potential effects resulting from the undertaking, is attached for your review. For further details on the following summary, see the attached report.

The project proposes to replace the existing 115kV breaker and add redundancy/resiliency with a second breaker to prevent disturbance to these critical facilities. The project will install new

concrete footings, a concrete slab, and a duct bank, which will require ground disturbance and modification of the existing substation yard.

The APE overlaps with the NRHP-listed NAS Sunnyvale Historic District and accounts for potential effects on the entire district. However, because the project proposes changes to the substation that would result in limited visual impacts to the immediate surroundings, the APE is limited to the 115kV Main Substation. No visual impacts resulting from the aboveground alterations are anticipated to affect the setting of the NAS Sunnyvale Historic District, its contributors, or other nearby historic properties due to the limited visibility of the proposed project; therefore, the APE is limited to the substation complex where project activities will occur.

There are no known archaeological resources in the APE, and the APE is in an area with a low potential for deeply buried precontact sites. However, the proposed work does extend into an area previously determined to have a heightened sensitivity for historic-period archaeological resources due to historical mapping and archival research that identified an agricultural building complex mapped north of the APE. Given the inherent inaccuracies in georeferencing historic maps, a buffer was applied to the mapped structures. This buffer is what extends into the APE. In general, it can be assumed that the APE is in an area with a moderate potential to contain resources associated with sparsely developed rural agricultural activities prior to 1931. The amount of prior disturbance of the APE appears high due to development of the 1984 substation, and the associated installation of subsurface infrastructure, including 12-foot-deep drilled foundation piers. As such, the potential for affecting potentially significant archaeological historical resources is considered low. Nonetheless, the potential for encountering unanticipated archaeological resources cannot be completely discounted. Should the project uncover previously unknown subsurface archaeological resources, contractors would immediately halt construction, secure the site, and notify NASA of the unanticipated discovery. NASA would follow the standard operating procedure for unanticipated discoveries as outlined in the Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan for ARC (AECOM 2014). Through implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the standard operating procedure for unanticipated discoveries, the undertaking would have no adverse effect on archaeological historic properties.

The survey identified one historic property within the APE, the NRHP-listed NAS Sunnyvale Historic District. However, no contributing elements of the district are within the APE. The APE includes the 115kV Main Substation (Building 591). Built in 1985, the substation has continuously served a support function. The substation was previously recorded (P-43-002585) and evaluated for eligibility for listing in the NRHP in 1998. It does not meet the NRHP criteria because it is not 50 years old and does not exhibit exceptional historical significance tied to any particular themes, events, individuals, or architectural significance related to its design, materials, type, or materials. The substation does not contribute to the NAS Sunnyvale Historic District and is not eligible for the NRHP. The project would be limited to the substation that does not contribute to the significance of the district. While the undertaking is in proximity to contributing elements of the district, due to the scale and nature of the project, no effects on the district or its closest contributors, Hangar 2 and Hangar 3, are anticipated. Therefore, the undertaking would result in no adverse effect on historic properties.

Finding of Effect

Based on the assessment conducted by qualified cultural resources professionals, NASA ARC has made a finding of No Adverse Effect for this undertaking.

NASA ARC requests the SHPO's concurrence on NASA ARC's finding of No Adverse Effect for this undertaking, pursuant to 36 C.F.R. 800.4(b). NASA ARC requests the SHPO's response within 30 days of receipt of this letter.

Please contact me at jonathan.d.ikan@nasa.gov or at (650) 604-6859 with your comments or questions.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Ikan
Center Cultural Resources Manager



cc:

HQ/EMD/Rebecca Klein, Ph.D., RPA

Attachment

Section 106 Consultation on Moffett Federal Airfield (MFA) 115kV Main Substation Refurbishment Project, NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, Santa Clara County, California, Memorandum prepared by AECOM, dated January 25, 2024