

1 [Initiating Landmark Designation - Clay Theatre]

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3 **Resolution initiating a landmark designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code for**  
4 **the Clay Theatre, at 2261 Fillmore Street, Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0630, Lot No.**  
5 **002.**

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7 WHEREAS, The 380-seat Clay Theatre—also known as ‘The Clay,’ is one of the oldest  
8 single screen nickelodeon movie houses in San Francisco; and

9 WHEREAS, The building was constructed strictly as a movie theatre, with no  
10 backstage for other types of performances; and

11 WHEREAS, The Naify family, legendary film impresarios, renovated the nickelodeon in  
12 1913 and opened the venture as the Regent; and

13 WHEREAS, The theatre, later known as The Avalon, was renamed in 1935 by Herbert  
14 Rosener as The Clay International and became one of the most important destinations for  
15 foreign and independent films throughout the 20th century; and

16 WHEREAS, Theatre architect, Vincent Raney, later remodeled The Clay in 1946 and it  
17 became a top destination for midnight movies; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1972, the Clay made history and hosted San Francisco’s first-ever  
19 midnight movie screening with the premiere of John Waters’ “Pink Flamingos”; and

20 WHEREAS, In 1985, the Clay hosted the premiere of the spaghetti western parody,  
21 “Lust in the Dust,” which starred Tab Hunter and Cesar Romero who also attended the  
22 screening; the movie would later become a cult classic; and

23 WHEREAS, The Clay Theatre became renowned for showing foreign and art-house  
24 content—including late night showings of ‘The Rocky Horror Picture Show’ and Tommy  
25 Wiseau’s ‘The Room,’ which drew hundreds of patrons each month; and

1           WHEREAS, Many of San Francisco’s single-screen movie theatres have closed or  
2 have been converted to other uses in the past few decades; and

3           WHEREAS, These single-screen movie theatres are important and unique cultural  
4 institutions in San Francisco; and

5           WHEREAS, The Clay Theatre’s relatively small scale reflect its age and origins as  
6 a nickelodeon; and

7           WHEREAS, The Clay Theatre’s physical structure, with art deco design elements and  
8 an elegant, simply decorated auditorium that recalls a jewel box, also holds unique  
9 architectural and aesthetic interest and value; now, therefore, be it

10          RESOLVED, That the Board requests that the Planning Department prepare a  
11 Landmark Designation Report to submit to the Historic Preservation Commission for its  
12 consideration of the unique historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value of the  
13 property and existing structure; and, be it

14          FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board requests that the Historic Preservation  
15 Commission consider whether the property or existing structures warrant landmark  
16 designation, and submit its recommendation to the Board according to Article 10 of the  
17 Planning Code.

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