

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning Code - Landmark District Designation - Alert Alley Early Residential Historic District]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to add a new Appendix Q to Article 10, Preservation of Historical, Architectural, and Aesthetic Landmarks, to create the Alert Alley Early Residential Historic District; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

Existing Law

Under Article 10, Section 1004 of the Planning Code, the Board of Supervisors may, by ordinance, designate individual structures or groups of structures that have special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value as a City landmarks or historic districts. Once a structure or group of structures has been named a landmark or a district, any construction, alteration, removal or demolition for which a City permit is required and that may affect the character-defining features of the landmark or district necessitates a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission ("HPC"). (Planning Code Section 1006; Charter of the City and County of San Francisco, Section 4.135.) Thus, landmark or historic district designation affords a high degree of protection to historic and architectural structures of merit in the City. There are currently more than 300 individual landmarks in the City and 14 historic districts under Article 10, in addition to other structures and districts in the downtown area that are protected under Article 11. (See Appendices to Article 10.)

Amendments to Current Law

This Ordinance amends the Planning Code by adding a new historic district to Article 10: Appendix Q, the Alert Alley Early Residential Historic District. It sets forth the location of the district, in the Mission Dolores neighborhood, centered on Alert Alley and Landers Street, and its precise boundaries, as well as block and lot information. The District is comprised of 21 properties, 18 of which are contributing resources, and three are non-contributing properties.

The Ordinance also sets forth the historical significance of the district. Specifically, the Ordinance explains that the Alert Alley Early Residential District is significant as a representative collection of residential buildings that physically illustrate the neighborhood's pre- and post-1906 Earthquake and Fires development transition. Because it was spared from the 1906 fires that decimated many other nearby neighborhoods, the district provides a unique combination of early, small scale single-family homes along with post-1906 reconstruction era larger scale multi-family flats and apartments. The Alert Alley Early

Residential District is a collection of buildings that represents the early small-scale residential and agricultural development patterns of the Mission Dolores neighborhood as well as larger residential flats and apartments indicative of the post-1906 reconstruction period. The district is also notable as it contains several buildings, including 260-264 and 266-268 Dolores Street, associated with the Dolores Street Fire Line, which served as a firebreak preserving properties west of Dolores from destruction in the devastating post-earthquake fires. The Alert Alley Early Residential District also is architecturally significant as a distinctive grouping of Victorian-era residential dwellings in Italianate, Stick-Eastlake, and Queen Anne styles. Along the narrow alleys, the pioneer origins of the buildings are indicated via setbacks, small building footprints, and low-slung massing, which stand out amongst the many larger rowhouses and flats that comprise much of the rest of the urbanized neighborhood. In the post-earthquake period, the Mission Dolores neighborhood transitioned from a semi-suburban, single-family dwelling area at the periphery of the city, to a dense neighborhood fully integrated into the larger urban context, characterized by an increase in multi-family development, particularly with the construction of apartment buildings and flats, including "Romeo Flats," in Classical Revival and Queen Anne architectural styles.

As required by Section 1004, the Ordinance lists in detail the character-defining features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined necessary. It distinguishes which types of scopes of work or alterations would require no Certificate of Appropriateness at all, which would require an Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness from Planning Department staff, as authorized by Section 1006.2(b) of the Planning Code, and which would require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HPC.

Background Information

This historic district designation was initiated by the Board of Supervisors. On October 15, 2025, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning Department staff and the Landmark Designation Report also prepared by Planning Department staff, the HPC voted to recommend approval of the Alert Alley Early Residential District designation of the to the Board of Supervisors.

As required by the Charter and Article 10, the HPC recommendation was sent to the Planning Commission, and, on October 23, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation, the Planning Commission also recommended approval of the Alert Alley Early Residential District designation of the to the Board of Supervisors.

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