

From: [Brian Turner](#)
To: [Peskin, Aaron \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [Christina Morris](#)
Subject: Lyon-Martin House Landmark Designation - National Trust Letter of Support
Date: Friday, October 16, 2020 3:09:23 PM
Attachments: [NTHP Letter re Lyon-Martin House.pdf](#)

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Supervisor Peskin,

Please find attached a letter of support from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for proposed legislation introduced by Supervisor Mandelman that would initiate landmark designation for 649-651 Duncan Street, the "Lyon-Martin House."

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Brian

Brian Turner | SENIOR FIELD OFFICER AND ATTORNEY
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NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
PRESERVATION SERVICES & OUTREACH DEPARTMENT
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**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
Save the past. Enrich the future.

October 16, 2020

Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Chair, Land Use and Transportation Committee
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

**Re: Landmark Designation - Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin House
(File No. 201138)**

Dear Supervisor Peskin,

On behalf of the National Trust for Historic Preservation we write to offer our full support for the designation of the home of Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin at 649-651 Duncan Street as an Article 10 Landmark. The local effort to designate this important cultural site came to our attention following publicization of the property's recent sale and through the grassroots advocacy of the Friends of Lyon-Martin House. Given the national and international significance of the LGBTQ+ history embodied by the Lyon-Martin House, the property deserves recognition and protection by the city of San Francisco as a landmark.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to saving a diverse array of historic places across the United States. Founded in 1949, the National Trust provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to save America's historic sites, tell the full American story, build stronger communities, and invest in preservation's future. With nearly one million visitors to its 28 historic sites each year, more than 1,500 main streets as members of its Main Street America program, and partnerships with more than 120 local and statewide organizations, the National Trust has deep knowledge and expertise in managing and preserving historic resources for various public interest uses, including museums, historic artist homes and studios, and collections.

For decades, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin played an integral role in the movement to protect the civil rights of the LGBTQ+ community. Their home on Duncan Street was the location of countless meetings of the Daughters of Bilitis, the nation's first lesbian-rights organization founded in San Francisco in 1955.

In 2016, the National Park Service released “LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History,” which was intended as a guide to increase the number of historic sites that reflect LGBTQ+ history that are included in historic registers, and ultimately preserved. The massive Theme Study was the first of its kind and included a chapter on civil rights history, as well as a chapter focused entirely on San Francisco’s LGBTQ+ history. The significance of the Daughters of Bilitis, as well as the work of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, was included in both of these chapters as examples of history worthy of preservation. Lyon and Martin were identified as “gay rights pioneers,” and the couple continued their advocacy throughout their lives on issues like gay marriage.

Lyon and Martin are particularly notable as the first couple to be married in San Francisco in 2004 when the city issued same-sex couple marriage licenses for a short time. They were then again the first couple to be married in 2008 in San Francisco after California’s Supreme Court legalized marriage. During all of this activism, Lyon and Martin lived together in their home at 649-651 Duncan Street.

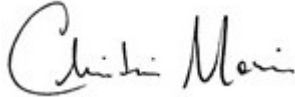
Further, across the country, historic places that reflect the history of the LGBTQ+ community are woefully underrepresented on registries of historic properties. The Theme Study noted in 2016 that of the approximately 95,000 places listed on the National Register of Historic Place, only ten places representing LGBTQ+ history were listed in the National Register or designated as a National Historic Landmark. Clearly, there is a need for the identification, recognition, and preservation of many more LGBTQ+ historic sites to ensure that we are telling a full and truthful American story.

The efforts and achievements of women like Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin have too often been lost, forgotten, or deliberately obscured, and the National Trust firmly believes that we cannot tell our national story without telling the story of women in America history. Our new national campaign, Where Women Made History, was launched specifically to tackle these structural inequities by reshaping how women’s history is interpreted and honored, and raising up places across the country, like the Lyon-Martin House, where women of all backgrounds, ages, beliefs, and identities have made a meaningful difference in their communities and in the world.

The local landmarking of the Lyon-Martin House would be a positive step in honoring the life and activism of pioneering LGBTQ+ advocates and ensuring the long-term preservation of a site that was so integral to their lives and their work. The National Trust fully supports the formal recognition and designation of the Lyon-Martin house as an Article 10 Landmark. We hope that the city will move forward expeditiously to approve the designation, and the wet would welcome further discussion with you about how best to preserve the legacy and tell the powerful civil rights story of the Lyon-Martin House as a source of inspiration for others.

Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of the residents of San Francisco and for your interest in protecting the places that tell the history of the LGBTQ+ community.

Sincerely,



Christina Morris
Senior Field Director, Los Angeles



Brian Turner
Senior Field Officer and Attorney, San Francisco

Cc (via Email):

Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, Sponsor
Erica Major, Assistant Clerk, Land Use and Transportation Committee
Supervisor Ahsha Safai, Member, Land Use and Transportation Committee
Supervisor Dean Preston, Member, Land Use and Transportation Committee
Aaron Jon Hyland, President, San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission
Shayne Watson, Friends of the Lyon-Martin House
Mike Buhler, President & CEO, San Francisco Heritage
Terry Beswick, Executive Director, GLBT Historical Society
Sharee Williamson, Senior Associate General Counsel, National Trust for Historic Preservation

From: [Shayne Watson](#)
To: [Peskin, Aaron \(BOS\)](#); [Preston, Dean \(BOS\)](#); [Safai, Ahsha \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [Major, Erica \(BOS\)](#); [Grete Miller](#); [MandelmanStaff, \[BOS\]](#)
Subject: Initiating Landmark Designation: Lyon-Martin House (649-651 Duncan Street)
Date: Monday, October 19, 2020 1:07:29 PM
Attachments: [Friends of Lyon-Martin House.pdf](#)

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Dear Supervisors Peskin, Preston, and Safai,

On behalf of the Friends of the Lyon-Martin House, please see the attached letter in support of initiating Landmark designation for the longtime home of Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin (10/19/20 agenda item 201138).

Sincerely,

Shayne Watson

Friends of the Lyon-Martin House

Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Chair, Land Use and Transportation Committee
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, Ca. 94102-4689

October 19, 2020

Dear Supervisor Peskin,

The Friends of the Lyon-Martin House (FLMH) formed in September 2020 as a community group seeking to preserve the longtime home of pioneering lesbian activists Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon at 649-651 Duncan Street in Noe Valley. We are writing to urge the Board of Supervisors to designate the Lyon-Martin House as a San Francisco Landmark.

Purchased by the couple in 1955, the Lyon-Martin House is embraced by community members as a site of international significance. For over 50 years, the Lyon-Martin House served as headquarters for groundbreaking social- and civil-rights movements, including some of the earliest meetings of the Daughters of Bilitis, the nation's first lesbian-rights group, cofounded by Lyon and Martin in 1955. Lyon and Martin did not lead single-issue lives; they were committed to ensuring that others could live their lives in safety, have access to opportunities, and experience and enjoy full inclusion and equal rights. Within this house, Lyon and Martin wrote, strategized, organized, and fought against the barriers of oppression. And in doing so, forced the world to change and turn toward the side of justice.

We hope you will join us in recognizing the extraordinary significance of this site and honor the legacy of Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin with Landmark designation of their longtime home at 649-651 Duncan Street.

Sincerely,

The Friends of the Lyon-Martin House

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