

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning Code - Landmark Designation - “The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City” - San Francisco Art Institute - 800 Chestnut Street]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the fresco titled “The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City” in the Diego Rivera Gallery of the San Francisco Art Institute, located at 800 Chestnut Street, Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0049, Lot No. 001, as a Landmark consistent with the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; 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 an individual structure that has special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value as a City landmark. Unless prohibited by state law, once a structure has been named a landmark, any construction, alteration, removal or demolition for which a City permit is required necessitates a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission. (Planning Code § 1006; Charter of the City and County of San Francisco, § 4.135.) Thus, landmark designation generally affords a high degree of protection to historic and architectural structures of merit in the City. There are currently approximately 290 individual landmarks in the City under Article 10, in addition to structures and districts in the downtown area that are protected under Article 11. (See App. A to Article 10.)

Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance amends the Planning Code to add a new historic landmark to the list of individual landmarks under Article 10: “The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City,” San Francisco Art Institute, at 800 Chestnut Street (“the Fresco”).

This ordinance finds that the Fresco is eligible for local designation as it is associated with events that have made a culturally and historically significant contribution to the broad patterns of San Francisco history and it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction and work of master artist Diego Rivera. Specifically, designation of the Fresco, which demonstrates familiar themes in Rivera’s work on the critical importance of labor in the artistic and creative process, is proper given its association with the preeminent Mexican artist, Diego Rivera. The Fresco, designed and painted on a wall selected by the artist from amongst several options, reflects its immediate environment,

physically and artistically, and is also significant for its association with art education at the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI), contributing to development of an academic field of study in mural and fresco painting and influencing many generations of artists that have taught or attended SFAI. This artwork, and the academic program and artists that evolved with and around it, is also significant for its influence on the New Deal-era Works Project Administration mural program. The Fresco is also significant for its association with the Latinx and Chicana arts communities through its direct lineage with the Mission Mural movement (also known as the community mural movement), a significant and vibrant part of San Francisco's cultural heritage.

As required by Section 1004, the ordinance lists the particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined necessary.

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