

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning Code - Landmark Designation - Castro Rock Steam Baths]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the Castro Rock Steam Baths, located at 578-582 Castro Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 2695, Lot No. 013, on the west side of Castro Street between 19th and 18th Streets, 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 more than 300 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 Castro Rock Steam Baths, located at 578-582 Castro Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 2695, Lot No. 013. The ordinance finds that the Castro Rock Steam Baths is eligible for local designation for its early association with the Castro as an LGBTQ enclave. Home to one of the city's longest-running bathhouses, this Victorian building became an exclusively gay bathhouse in the 1970s, amidst the backdrop of the Castro neighborhood initially establishing itself as an internationally recognized LGBTQ enclave. As required by Section 1004, the ordinance lists the particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind, as determined necessary.