

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning Code - Landmark Designation - 2031 Bush Street (aka the Kinmon Gakuen Building)]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate 2031 Bush Street (aka the Kinmon Gakuen Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027, as a Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1, and findings of public necessity, convenience and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302.

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. 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 ("HPC"). (Planning Code Section 1006; Charter of the City and County of San Francisco, Section 4.135.) Thus, landmark designation affords a high degree of protection to historic and architectural structures of merit in the City. There are currently more than 270 individual landmarks in the City under Article 10, in addition to other structures and districts in the downtown area that are protected under Article 11. (See Appendix 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 Kinmon Gakuen Building, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027.

The ordinance finds that the Kinmon Gakuen Building is significant because of its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, and also because it embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. Specifically, designation of the Kinmon Gakuen Building is associated with the social, cultural, and educational enrichment of Japanese Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century, as the home of Japanese language and culture school, Kinmon Gakuen, and with the evacuation, relocation, and incarceration of U.S. citizens and residents of Japanese descent during World War II. It is also significant for its association with community organizing and activism among African Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century, as home of the Booker T. Washington Community Center from 1942 to 1952. Designation of the Kinmon Gakuen Building is also proper as it is an excellent example

of an educational building designed in the Mediterranean Revival architectural style in San Francisco.

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

Background Information

The landmark designation was initiated by the HPC pursuant to its authority under the Charter to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of landmark designations and historic district designations under the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors. The HPC held a hearing to initiate the landmark designation of the Kinmon Gakuen Building on February 6, 2019. April 3, 2019, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation and having considered the Landmark Designation Case Report prepared by Planning Department staff Desiree Smith, the HPC voted to recommend approval of Property Name to the Board of Supervisors.

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