FILE NO. 231271

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning Code - Landmark Designation - Alexandria Theater]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the Alexandria Theater, located at 5400 Geary Boulevard, at the northwest corner of Geary Boulevard and 18th Avenue, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 1450, Lot No. 048, 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. 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 260 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: 5400 Geary Boulevard (known as the Alexandria Theater).

The ordinance finds that the Alexandria Theater is eligible for designation as a City landmark under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and C (as it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; and embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; and represents the work of a master). Specifically, designation of the Alexandria Theater is proper given its significance as a former neighborhood movie palace designed by architects of merit the Reid Brothers in the Egyptian Revival style (1923) and remodeled by architect of merit A. A. Cantin in the Streamline Moderne style (1941) for prominent theater owners the Levin family.

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

On March 14, 2023, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 122-23, sponsored by Supervisor Connie Chan, initiating landmark designation of the Alexandria Theater as a San Francisco Landmark pursuant to Section 1004.1 of the Planning Code. On March 24, 2023, the resolution was enacted. 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. On November 1, 2023, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation and having considered the Landmark Designation Case Report prepared by Planning Department staff Shannon Ferguson, the HPC voted to recommend approval of the Alexandria Theater to the Board of Supervisors.