BOARD of SUPERVISORS

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MEMORANDUM

Date: December 20, 20203

To: Planning Department/Planning Commission

From: John Carroll, Assistant Clerk, Land Use and Transportation Committee

Subject: Board of Supervisors Legislation Referral - File No. 231271
Planning Code - Landmark Designation - Alexandria Theater

☒ California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Determination
(California Public Resources Code, Sections 21000 et seq.)
- ☒ Ordinance / Resolution
- ☐ Ballot Measure

☐ Amendment to the Planning Code, including the following Findings:
(Planning Code, Section 302(b): 90 days for Planning Commission review)
☐ General Plan ☐ Planning Code, Section 101.1 ☐ Planning Code, Section 302

☐ Amendment to the Administrative Code, involving Land Use/Planning
(Board Rule 3.23: 30 days for possible Planning Department review)

☐ General Plan Referral for Non-Planning Code Amendments
(Charter, Section 4.105, and Administrative Code, Section 2A.53)
(Required for legislation concerning the acquisition, vacation, sale, or change in use of City property; subdivision of land; construction, improvement, extension, widening, narrowing, removal, or relocation of public ways, transportation routes, ground, open space, buildings, or structures; plans for public housing and publicly-assisted private housing; redevelopment plans; development agreements; the annual capital expenditure plan and six-year capital improvement program; and any capital improvement project or long-term financing proposal such as general obligation or revenue bonds.)

☐ Historic Preservation Commission
- ☐ Landmark *(Planning Code, Section 1004.3)*
- ☐ Cultural Districts *(Charter, Section 4.135 & Board Rule 3.23)*
- ☐ Mills Act Contract *(Government Code, Section 50280)*
- ☐ Designation for Significant/Contributory Buildings *(Planning Code, Article 11)*

Please send the Planning Department/Commission recommendation/determination to John Carroll at john.carroll@sfgov.org.

[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.

NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
Additions to Codes are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.
Deletions to Codes are in ~~*strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*~~.
Board amendment additions are in double-underlined Arial font.
Board amendment deletions are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
Asterisks (* * * *) indicate the omission of unchanged Code subsections or parts of tables.

Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

Section 1. CEQA and Land Use Findings.

(a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 *et seq*.). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____ and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board of Supervisors affirms this determination.

(b) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that the proposed landmark designation of the Alexandria Theater, located at 5400 Geary Boulevard,

Assessor's Parcel Block No. 1450, Lot No. 048, will serve the public necessity, convenience, and welfare for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 1354, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated herein by reference.

(c) On November 1, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission, in Resolution No.1354, adopted findings that the actions contemplated in this ordinance are consistent, on balance, with the City's General Plan and with the eight priority policies of Planning Code Section 101.1. The Board adopts these findings as its own.

Section 2. General Findings.

(a) 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. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in Board File No. 230266.

(b) Pursuant to Charter Section 4.135, the Historic Preservation Commission has authority "to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of landmark designations and historic district designations under the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors."

(c) Planning Department Preservation staff prepared a Landmark Designation Fact Sheet for Alexandria Theater. All preparers meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for historic preservation program staff, as set forth in Code of Federal Regulations Title 36, Part 61, Appendix A. The report was reviewed for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10 of the Planning Code.

(d) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of November 1, 2023, reviewed Planning Department staff's analysis of the historical significance of the Alexandria Theater set forth in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated November 1, 2023.

(e) On November 1, 2023, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation, and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning Department staff, and the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended designation of the Alexandria Theater as a landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code by Resolution No.1354. Said resolution, including the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, is on file with the Clerk of the Board in Board File No. 231271.

(f) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the Alexandria Theater has a special character and special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will further the purposes of and conform to the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code. In doing so, the Board hereby incorporates by reference the findings of the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet.

Section 3. Designation.

Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, the Alexandria Theater, 5400 Geary Boulevard, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 1450, Lot No. 048, is hereby designated as a San Francisco Landmark (the "Landmark") under Article 10 of the Planning Code. Appendix A to Article 10 of the Planning Code is hereby amended to include this property.

Section 4. Required Data.

(a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the parcel located at 5400 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel Block No. 1450, Lot No. 048, occupied by the Alexandria Theater, in San Francisco's Inner Richmond District.

(b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and shown in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet and other supporting materials contained in Planning Department Record Docket No. 2023-003458DES. In brief, the Alexandria Theater is eligible for local designation under National Register of Historic Places Criterion A (Events) and Criterion C (Design/Construction) for 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.

(c) The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined necessary, are those shown in photographs and described in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, which can be found in Planning Department Record Docket No. 2023-003458DES, and which are incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully set forth. Specifically, the following features are character-defining, and shall be preserved or replaced in-kind:

(1) All those physical features, including form, architectural ornament, and materials of the Alexandria Theater, identified as:

(A) Height and massing;

(B) East and south elevations with pilasters and ornamental trim;

(C) All elements of the curved corner colonnade;

(D) Blade sign and tower that supports it;

(E) Marquee;

(F) Main recessed corner entrance with terrazzo patterned flooring;

(G) Lobby with glass bead-tiled drinking fountain, pendant light fixtures, curved main stair with metal and wood handrail, and Art Deco bas-relief panels along the main stair walls;

(H) Upper lobby with ceiling mounted light fixture and metal and wood handrail;

(I) Art Deco bas-relief panels at top of walls in mezzanine corridor;

(O) Art Deco murals on east and west walls of the auditorium; and

(P) Sunburst chandelier in auditorium.

Section 5. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DAVID CHIU, City Attorney

By: /s/ Peter R. Miljanich
PETER R. MILJANICH
Deputy City Attorney

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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.