FILE NO. 260574

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning Code - Landmark Designation - De Urioste Home - James C. Hormel Mansion]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the De Urioste Home - James C. Hormel Mansion, located at 181 Buena Vista Avenue East, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 1258, Lot No. 026, on the east side of Buena Vista Avenue East between Waller Street and Duboce Avenue, 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 De Urioste Home - James C. Hormel Mansion, located at 181 Buena Vista Avenue East, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 1258, Lot No. 026. The ordinance finds that the De Urioste Home - James C. Hormel Mansion is eligible for local designation due to its historical associations with past owners including the De Urioste family and James C. Hormel. The De Urioste family were a Guatemalan family heralded as a pioneering San Francisco family, actively involved in local politics, business, the development of the Park Hill Tract and philanthropic endeavors. The family owned the property for two generations until selling it to LGBTQ philanthropist, activist, and diplomat James C. Hormel, who resided in the home from 1986-2012. Hormel was active in the fight against the Briggs initiative in the late 1970s, which sought to ban gays and lesbians from working in California public schools, and helped establish the Human Rights Campaign Fund in 1981. President Bill Clinton nominated Hormel to be the Ambassador to Luxembourg in 1999 amidst a great deal of controversy, becoming the first openly gay American ambassador to a foreign country. Over the course of his lifetime, Hormel donated more than $15 Million to LGBTQ causes,

including funding the James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center at San Francisco Public Library's Main Library, which opened in 1996. The property is also an exemplary example of Queen Anne architecture.

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

Background Information

On May 20, 2026, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation and having considered the specialized analyses reviewed by Planning Department staff and the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, the Historic Preservation Commission voted to recommend landmark designation of the De Urioste Home - James C. Hormel Mansion to the Board of Supervisors.