FILE NO. 260681

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning Code - Landmark Designation - Fernando Nelson Home]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the Fernando Nelson Home, located at 701 Castro Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3603, Lot No. 075, on the east side of Castro Street between 20th Street and Liberty Street, 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 Fernando Nelson Home, located at 701 Castro Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3603, Lot No. 075. The ordinance finds that the Fernando Nelson Home is eligible for local designation for having been built by, and serving as the residence of, Fernando Nelson, who was one of San Francisco's most prolific housing developers. The property was constructed in 1897 in the Eureka Valley neighborhood, now commonly known as the Castro. Fernando Nelson constructed more than 4,000 houses during his 70 plus years of homebuilding in San Francisco. The property was Nelson's private residence, and he ran portions of his business from his home, keeping a workshop, lumber, and other building material storage on the lot behind his home, with work horses stabled in the basement. The home was originally constructed uphill at the current site of 709 Castro Street, which was then part of the same lot. By 1950 the owners moved the property to its current position.

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 June 3, 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 Fernando Nelson Home to the Board of Supervisors.