Resolution initiating an amendment to the landmark designation of 240 Leland Avenue (aka St. James Presbyterian Church), Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012, under Article 10 of the Planning Code.

WHEREAS, Under Planning Code, Section 1004.1, the Board of Supervisors (Board) may by Resolution initiate a Landmark designation; and

WHEREAS, The St. James Presbyterian Church, located in the Visitacion Valley neighborhood, at 240 Leland Avenue, Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012, was built in 1923 by renowned architect Julia Morgan; and

WHEREAS, The St. James Presbyterian Church has its roots in the first few years of Visitacion Valley’s history as a city neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, In 1906, a group came from the University Mound Presbyterian Church in the Portola neighborhood and started a Sunday School in Visitacion Valley at the Bayshore Hall, located at the present-day Visitacion Valley Branch Library; and

WHEREAS, On April 26, 1908, the congregation formed with 69 original members and has been a part of the cultural and spiritual life of Visitacion Valley since; and

WHEREAS, The St. James Presbyterian Church is one of the oldest religious congregations in Visitacion Valley and was where the family of the first American Governor of California worshipped; and

WHEREAS, After outgrowing its modest original building, the congregation commissioned Julia Morgan, one of California’s most heralded master-architects and engineers, to design the current church; and
WHEREAS, Designed in Arts and Crafts styles, the current St. James Presbyterian Church building was dedicated on March 13, 1923, and will celebrate its centennial next year in 2023; and

WHEREAS, The prominent stained glass window on the church’s façade, a long time symbol of the St. James community, depicts the Parable of the Sower and was reportedly relocated from a church in the Sierra Nevada foothills; and

WHEREAS, In 1947, the men of the church were organized as the Valley Churchmen and carried the heaviest part of the load of repairing and improving the church property through their volunteer labor; and

WHEREAS, St. James was designated the first Filipino Presbyterian ministry by the Presbytery of San Francisco in the late 1980s; and

WHEREAS, Through decades of demographic and generational changes and now recovering from the COVID pandemic of 2020, a small congregation of mostly Filipino families continues to this day persevering as a church just like the group did in 1908; and

WHEREAS, In partnership with the Visitacion Valley History Project, community worked on identifying preservation projects to address the neighborhood’s underrepresentation in the city’s official inventory of historic buildings; and

WHEREAS, Visitacion Valley currently has no designated city-landmarks and through a month-long campaign to identify the neighborhood’s first city landmark designation, residents and community members voted for St. James Presbyterian Church; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby initiates an amendment to the landmark designation of the St. James Presbyterian Church, located at 240 Leland Avenue (Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012); and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors requests that Planning Department prepare a Landmark Designation Report to submit to the Historic Preservation
Commission for its consideration of the full historical, architectural, aesthetic, and cultural interest and value of the St. Presbyterian Church; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors requests that the Historical Preservation Commission consider what amendments to the landmark designation are warranted to capture the property's full historical significance, and submit its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, according to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

Supervisors Walton; Peskin, Melgar, Preston

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Resolution initiating an amendment to the landmark designation of 240 Leland Avenue (aka St. James Presbyterian Church), Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012, under Article 10 of the Planning Code.

July 11, 2022 Land Use and Transportation Committee - RECOMMENDED

July 19, 2022 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Chan, Dorsey, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 7/19/2022 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

London N. Breed
Mayor

7/28/22
Date Approved