Resolution initiating a landmark designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code for 2261 Fillmore Street (aka the Clay Theatre), Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0630, Lot No. 002; and extending the prescribed time within which the Historic Preservation Commission may render its decision by 90 days, for a total of 180 days

WHEREAS, Under Planning Code Section 1004.1, the Board of Supervisors may by resolution initiate landmark designation; and

WHEREAS, the 380-seat Clay Theatre, also known as “The Clay,” located at 2261 Fillmore Street, Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0630, Lot No. 002, is one of the oldest single screen nickelodeon movie houses in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the building was constructed strictly as a movie theatre, with no backstage for other types of performances; and

WHEREAS, the Naify family, legendary film impresarios, renovated the nickelodeon in 1913 and opened the venture as the Regent; and

WHEREAS, the theatre, later known as The Avalon, was renamed in 1935 under Herbert Rosener as The Clay International and became one of the most important destinations for foreign and independent films throughout the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, theatre architect Vincent Raney later remodeled The Clay Theatre in 1946 and it became a top destination for midnight movies; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, the Clay Theatre made history and hosted San Francisco’s first-ever midnight movie screening with the premiere of John Waters’ “Pink Flamingos”; and
WHEREAS, in 1985, the Clay Theatre hosted the premiere of the spaghetti western parody “Lust in the Dust,” which starred Tab Hunter and Cesar Romero, who also attended the screening, and the movie would later become a cult classic; and

WHEREAS, The Clay Theatre became renowned for showing foreign and art-house content, including late night showings of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” and Tommy Wiseau’s “The Room,” which drew hundreds of patrons each month; and

WHEREAS, many of San Francisco’s single-screen movie theatres have closed or have been converted to other uses in the past few decades; and

WHEREAS, these single-screen movie theatres are important and unique cultural institutions in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the Clay Theatre’s relatively small scale reflects its age and origins as a nickelodeon; and

WHEREAS, the Clay Theatre’s physical structure, with art deco design elements and an elegant, simply decorated auditorium that recalls a jewel box, also holds unique architectural and aesthetic interest and value; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby initiates landmark designation of 2261 Fillmore Street (aka the Clay Theatre), Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0630, Lot No. 002; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board requests that the Planning Department prepare a Landmark Designation Report to submit to the Historic Preservation Commission for its consideration of the unique historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value of the property; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board requests that the Historic Preservation Commission consider whether the property warrants landmark designation, and submit its recommendation to the Board according to Article 10 of the Planning Code.
FURTHER RESOLVED, That Planning Code, Section 1004.2(b), requires the Historic Preservation Commission to respond to landmark designation initiations from the Board within 90 days, but that the Board of Supervisors may, by resolution, extend the time within which the Historic Preservation Commission is to render its decision; therefore, in order to allow the Planning Department more time to complete its review of this landmark designation, this Resolution shall also serve as a 90-day extension of that deadline, for a total of 180 days to respond starting from the transmittal date.
Resolution initiating a landmark designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code for 2261 Fillmore Street (aka the Clay Theatre), Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0630, Lot No. 002; and extending the prescribed time within which the Historic Preservation Commission may render its decision by 90 days, for a total of 180 days.

File Number: 210726 Date Passed: July 27, 2021

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 7/27/2021 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

London N. Breed
Mayor

8/4/21 Date Approved