

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE DESIGNATING 605 NORTH 6TH STREET (KOW KEE SIXPLEX) AS A CITY LANDMARK THAT HAS SPECIAL HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, CULTURAL, AESTHETIC, OR ENGINEERING INTEREST OR VALUE OF AN HISTORIC NATURE PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 13.48 OF THE SAN JOSE MUNICIPAL CODE

**FILE NO. HL26-004
APN: 249-39-024**

WHEREAS, Chapter 13.48 of Title 13 of the San José Municipal Code provides for the designation of structures and/or sites of special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or engineering interest or value of a historical nature as landmarks by the City Council of the City of San José (“City Council”); and

WHEREAS, San José Municipal Code Section 13.48.110, subsection A, provides that any historic property can be nominated for designation as a City Landmark by the City Council, the Historic Landmarks Commission, or by application of the owner or the authorized agent of the owner of the property for which designation is requested; and

WHEREAS, the property owners, Richard Kogura, Cindy Kogura & Carolyn Kogura nominated the historic property for designation as a City Landmark and the Director of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement initiated the procedure pursuant to Section 13.48.110, subsection C, for consideration of such landmark designation for the building located at 605 North 6th Street; and

WHEREAS, Section 13.48.110, subsection E, provides that before the City Council may designate any property as a landmark, it shall hold at least one public hearing on such proposed designation, and that before it holds said public hearing, the Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement shall schedule a public hearing of said

proposed landmark designation before the Historic Landmarks Commission of the City of San José for its consideration and recommendation; and

WHEREAS, on October 7, 2026, the Historic Landmarks Commission conducted a public hearing and recommended approval of the designation of 605 North 6th Street as a landmark that has special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or engineering interest or value of a historic nature and made certain findings with respect thereto; and

WHEREAS, a copy of the City of San José Historic Landmark Nomination File No. HL26-004 upon which such recommendation was made is on file in the Planning Division of the City of San José and available for review at 200 East Santa Clara Street, 3rd Floor, San José, CA, 95113, and on the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement webpage (www.sanjoseca.gov); and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 13.48.110, subsection F, the Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement duly noticed a public hearing on said landmark designation before the City Council for November 10, 2026, or as soon thereafter as said matter could be heard, where the City Council provided all persons a full opportunity to be heard and considered all evidence and testimony presented regarding 605 North 6th Street; and

WHEREAS, a legal description of 605 North 6th Street is attached as Exhibit "A" and incorporated by reference;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The foregoing recitals are incorporated into this Resolution.

SECTION 2. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 13.48 of Title 13 of the San José Municipal Code, the Historic Preservation Ordinance, this Council does hereby designate 605 North 6th Street as a landmark that has special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or engineering interest or value of a historic nature.

SECTION 3. Said designation is based on landmark significance criterion 1, 3, and 4 outlined in Section 13.48.110 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

- **Criterion 1:** *Its character, interest, or value as part of the local, regional, state or national history, heritage, or culture.*

Analysis: The Kow Kee Sixplex is a brick commercial building constructed in 1888. It is the oldest surviving structure in San José's Japantown and the oldest surviving building from the Heinlerville Chinatown era. Built by Chinese immigrant entrepreneur Charley Kow Kee immediately outside Heinlerville, the building is directly associated with the development of Japantown and its Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino communities.

From 1888 through 1961, the building supported more than seventy years of the neighborhood's commercial, social, and cultural life, serving as housing and as an employment office, store, restaurant, barbershop, billiards hall, and gambling venue. Notable associations include Wing Long's employment office, which connected Chinese farmworkers with agricultural employers; Sing Chong's grocery, which originated in Heinlerville; and Filipino community leader Leo Escalante's barbershop and billiards hall. From approximately 1900 to 1952, the Jackson Street wall also served as a public bulletin board and community information hub. In 1961, the property became part of the Kogura Company, linking it to the continued development of Japantown after World War II.

The property further reflects the history of anti-Asian discrimination in California. Kow Kee's lease illustrates restrictions that prevented Asian immigrants from owning real property, while Japanese tenants were among those forcibly

removed during World War II under Executive Order 9066. Kohei and Hatsuyo Kogura, who had been incarcerated at the Gila River camp, purchased the property in 1961 as part of the expansion of their Japantown business. These associations establish the building as an important physical record of Japantown's development and the social, commercial, and cultural history of its diverse Asian communities.

- **Criterion 3:** *Identification with persons who significantly contributed to local, regional, state, or national culture and history.*

Analysis: The subject property is directly associated with John Heinlen (1815–1903), whose actions significantly shaped the history and physical development of San José's Chinese community. In 1887, following the destruction of the Second Market Street Chinatown, Heinlen leased land to a syndicate of Chinese merchants and facilitated the development of Heinlenville, a six-block, fire-resistant brick community designed by architect Theodore Lenzen. He also provided a private water system and continued the project despite lawsuits and threats of violence. Heinlenville remained the center of San José's Chinese community for more than forty years.

Constructed in 1888 by Chinese merchant Charley Kow Kee immediately outside Heinlenville, 605 North 6th Street building was built in the same period, using similar brick construction and architectural form, and represents the community's immediate expansion beyond Heinlenville. Heinlen's contribution to Japantown. The property's direct association with the community Heinlen established supports its identification with a person who significantly contributed to San José's local history.

- **Criterion 4:** *Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the city of San José.*

Analysis: Constructed in 1888 during the expansion of Heinlenville, San José's North 6th Street Chinatown, the building at 605 North 6th Street is located in the

historic core of Japantown, where Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino communities established homes, businesses, and community institutions. Its history illustrates the economic strategies Asian immigrants developed in response to discriminatory property ownership laws. Charley Kow Kee initially leased the land and constructed the building, and the property subsequently passed through Chinese, Japanese American, Filipino, and Japanese American ownership, reflecting the neighborhood's demographic evolution over nearly eight decades.

The building also documents the social and economic life of the community. Its units housed groceries, laundries, barbershops, restaurants, and employment offices, as well as illegal gambling operations during the 1920s through the 1940s that attracted Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Caucasian patrons. From approximately 1900 to 1952, the Jackson Street wall served as a community bulletin board displaying local news, reports from Japan, and sports scores. These longstanding uses demonstrate the building's role not only as a place of residence and commerce, but also as a community institution.

Through its early association with Heinlerville, successive ownership by members of San José's Asian communities, and varied residential, commercial, and community uses, the Kow Kee Sixplex provides a tangible record of the development and evolution of Japantown and exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, and historic heritage of San José.

SECTION 4. The City Clerk is hereby directed to notify those persons designated in San José Municipal Code Section 13.48.110, subsection L, in the manner specified by said Section and to direct the recordation of a Notice of Granting of this resolution in the Office of the Recorder of the County of Santa Clara.

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

DISQUALIFIED:

MATT MAHAN
Mayor

ATTEST:

TONI J. TABER, MMC
City Clerk

EXHIBIT "A"

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION
FOR**

**605 North 6th Street (KOW KEE SIXPLEX)
SAN JOSE, CA 95112**

FILE NO. HL26-004

APN: 249-39-024

All that certain real property located in the City of San Jose, County of Santa Clara, State of California, and more particularly described as follows: to-wit:

BEGINNING at the point of intersection of the Northerly line of Jackson Street with the Westerly line of Sixth Street; thence running Northerly and along said Westerly line of Sixth Street, ninety-five (95) feet thence Westerly and parallel with said line of Jackson Street 35.75 feet to the Easterly line of that certain parcel of land conveyed by A. E. Lennon to Shiro Akizuki by Deed dated October 18, 1928, and recorded October 18, 1928 in Book 433 of Official Records, page 53, Santa Clara County Records; thence running at right angles Southerly and along the Easterly line of lands so conveyed to Shiro Akizuki, ninety-five (95) feet to a point on the Northerly line of Jackson Street; thence running at right angles Easterly and along said Northerly line of Jackson Street, thirty-five and 75/100 (35.75) feet to the point of beginning, being a part of Lot 199 in Block 19 of White's Addition to the City of San Jose.

**Assessor's Parcel No. 249-39-024
Commonly known as 605 North Sixth Street, San Jose**