CHINATOWN KITE SHOP

Application No.: LBR-2022-23-021
Business Name: Chinatown Kite Shop
Business Address: 717 Grant Ave.
District: District 3
Applicant: Albert Chang, Owner
Nomination Letter Date: October 18, 2022
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Situated along the colorful and iconic Grant Avenue, Chinatown Kite Shop is one of the longest-running, family owned kite shops in historic Chinatown. It was established in 1971 by resident and community leader, Albert Chang, who opened Chinatown Kite Shop as a means to support his family, while also celebrating and uplifting the significance of kites in Chinese culture. Since then, Chinatown Kite Shop has grown to become a quintessential business and a staple of Chinese culture in San Francisco. It is well-recognized and -regarded for its vibrant storefront, unique shopping experience, and strong relationships with its community.

Chinatown Kite Shop has been owned and operated by Chang and his family for two generations and is now serving a third generation of loyal customers. The shop offers an expansive selection of kites, souvenirs, and specialty items. Kites range in design and detail from child-sized kites of colorful fish to traditional hand-painted Chinese paper kites. Along with kites, they offer a wide range of souvenirs and gifts, including Chinese paintings, dancing dragons, Chinese costumes, lanterns, Feng Shui items, animal hats and umbrellas, Chinese New Year decorations and calendars, collectible art tiles, mobile device cases, party items, and woks.

More broadly, Chinatown Kite Shop has been an invaluable resource to the community, providing products and services at community events and local fundraisers, a feat that had become increasingly challenging for small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, in recent years, Chinatown Kite Shop played a major role in the annual Chinatown Winter Wonderland festival and the Chinatown Pop-Up Series fundraiser in the Ferry Building. Furthermore, in May 2022, the National Park Service and Park Conservancy commissioned 1,500 custom made kites from Chinatown Kite Shop for Crissy Field’s 20th Anniversary.

The success of Chinatown Kite Shop is largely due to the values of kinship and community that the Chang family and staff have cultivated over five decades. Albert Chang is a strong advocate for the Chinatown community and educates his customers, especially young people, about kites and their long history of cultural significance in China. As a result of Chang’s dedication and advocacy, Chinatown Kite Shop continues to preserve and promote important elements of Chinese heritage and instill cultural interest in future generations. By the same token, Chinatown Kite Shop is continuously committed to preserving its location along historic Grant Avenue, 30-year-old lightbox and signage, and its one-of-a-kind facade and interior adorned with a myriad of charming and exquisite kites.
CRITERION 1
Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?
Yes, Chinatown Kite Shop has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:
717 Grant Ave. from 1971 to Present (51 Years)

CRITERION 2
Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?
Yes, Chinatown Kite Shop has contributed to the history and identity of the Chinatown neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The business is associated with the Chinese tradition of kite crafting and flying.
- The property at 717 Grant Avenue is not listed in a Historic Resource Registry. However, the site is located within the Chinatown Historic District which encompasses the area historically and popularly identified as the heart of the Chinese community. The area is broadly associated with the settlement of San Francisco’s earliest Chinese immigrants in the 17th century and is architecturally significant for its concentration of buildings constructed after the 1906 earthquake. Chinatown's architecture is characterized by two- to four-story masonry buildings that "applied Chinese styles of architectural detailing to standard early 20th Century buildings." (Historic Resource Evaluation Response: Case No. 2016-010671ENV).

Additionally, the three-story, mixed-use property encompassing Chinatown Kite Shop has also been the primary office and headquarters for the Ong Ko Met Association since 1951, which purchased the property at 715-719 Grant Avenue in that same year. Established in San Francisco in 1877, the Ong Ko Met Benevolent Association formed to secure the safety of Chinese Americans and fight for the rights of Chinese immigrants during a period marked by Anti-Chinese discrimination and violence. The association continues to utilize and lease the space with the renewed mission to preserve and exhibit Chinese art, culture, and history.

- There have been a number of reputable local and national news sources revering Chinatown Kite Shop as one of San Francisco’s must-visit places; and recognizing its contribution to the Chinatown neighborhood and San Francisco at large. In the last 10 years, Chinatown Kite Shop has been the subject of articles by the San Francisco Chronicle, SF Weekly, Secret San Francisco, SF Gate, and San Francisco Travel. The business has also been referenced in publications by ABC News and NBC Bay Area.

CRITERION 3
Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?
Yes, Chinatown Kite Shop is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Chinatown Kite Shop qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:
- Light-box and signage.
- Vibrant and colorful storefront window display.
- Traditional hand-crafted Chinese kites.
- Legacy of family ownership.

CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.
- Kite store.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Chinatown Kite Shop currently located at 717 Grant Ave. in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program
Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Chinatown Kite Shop, currently located at 717 Grant Ave.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included on the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on December 12, 2022, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Chinatown Kite Shop in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Chinatown Kite Shop.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:
- Light-box and signage.
- Vibrant and colorful storefront window display.
- Traditional hand-crafted Chinese kites.
- Legacy of family ownership.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Chinatown Kite Shop on the Legacy Business Registry:
- Kite store.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on December 12, 2022.

_________________________
Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _______________________

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –
Application No.: LBR-2022-23-021
Business Name: Chinatown Kite Shop
Business Address: 717 Grant Ave.
District: District 3
Applicant: Albert Chang, Owner
Nomination Letter Date: October 18, 2022
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

X Yes   No

717 Grant Ave. from 1971 to Present (51 Years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood’s history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

X Yes   No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

X Yes   No

NOTES: n/a

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: October 19, 2022

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program
October 18, 2022

Director Katy Tang via email <Katy.Tang@sfgov.org>
San Francisco Office of Small Business
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Director Tang:

I am writing to nominate Chinatown Kite Shop for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry.

Located at 717 Grant Avenue in the heart of Chinatown, Chinatown Kite Shop is a family owned and operated specialty store which has been selling handmade Chinese dragon kites, parafoils, wind wheels, and other assorted since 1971. It is also noted for selling items for feng shui, an ancient Chinese traditional practice including new year decorations. Despite facing a myriad of challenges due to the pandemic, the Chinatown Kite Shop has not stopped operating and continues to be a fixture in the local community.

It has been featured on the SF Weekly “Ferry Building Showcases Chinatown Merchants”, San Francisco Travel “Shopping, Dining and Culture in San Francisco’s Chinatown” and many more publications.

Chinatown Kite Shop would benefit from inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry, and it is my honor to nominate it for inclusion.

Sincerely,

Aaron Peskin
## Business Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Business name:</strong></th>
<th>Chinatown Kite Shop</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business owner name(s):</strong></td>
<td>Albert Chang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current business address:</strong></td>
<td>717 Grant Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telephone:</strong></td>
<td>(415) 989 - 5182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email:</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:chinatownkite@gmail.com">chinatownkite@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mailing address</strong> (if different than above):</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Website:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Facebook:</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Twitter:</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN):</strong></td>
<td>0 4 4 6 2 0 1</td>
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Do any of these describe your business? (select all that apply)

- [ ] Immigrant-Owned Business
- [ ] LGBTQ+-Owned Business
- [ ] Minority-Owned Business*
- [ ] Owned by Person with a Disability
- [ ] Veteran-Owned Business
- [ ] Woman-Owned Business

*Minority is defined as one or more of the following racial or ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

## Contact Person Information

| **Contact person name:** | Albert Chang |
| **Contact person title:** | Owner |
| **Contact telephone:** | (415) 989 - 5182 |
| **Contact email:** | chinatownkite@gmail.com |
# Business Location(s)

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business.

If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original San Francisco address:</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>717 Grant Ave.</td>
<td>94108</td>
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Is this location the founding location of the business? (Y/N): Y

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>To:</th>
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<tr>
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Section Three:
Disclosure Statement.


This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

☐ I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.

☐ I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.

☐ I attest that the business’s business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.

☐ I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City’s labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.

☐ I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.

☐ I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.

☐ I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

__________________________
Name (Print):

__________________________
Date:

__________________________
Signature:

Albert Chang

5/21/22

Albert Chang
INTRODUCTION

a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?

Chinatown Kite Shop is a one-of-a-kind, fun, and unique specialty store in Chinatown. The family-owned store is a classic kite shop that offers a plethora of kites, from child-sized kites of colorful fish to more serious, elaborate handmade Chinese dragon kites. Chinatown Kite Shop also offers a great selection of souvenirs and gifts, including party items, Chinese paintings, dancing dragons, Chinese costumes, lanterns, feng shui items, animal hats and umbrellas, Chinese New Year decorations and calendars, collectible art tiles, iPhone and iPad cases, and woks. Store owner Albert Chang and his staff always strive to provide an enjoyable shopping experience to their customers.

b. Describe who the business serves.

Situated right along Grant Avenue, Chinatown Kite Shop is the eye-catching and signature landmark in Chinatown. It is recognized as a historic business by the Chinatown community. Established in the 1970s, Chinatown Kite Shop is now serving a third generation of customers. Their loyal customers often would bring in their children for a visit, to pick a kite or two, as their parents did back in the olden days. Those who have moved out of San Francisco still drop by the shop whenever they are in town. All these invaluable experiences have established a sense of kinship in the community that is cherished by the past generations and will benefit many generations to come.

c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.

Specialty kite shop.

CRITERION 1: The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years

a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.

Chinatown Kite Shop was founded in 1971 by Albert Chang, in hopes to support his family. The store was located at 601 Grant Avenue in the Chinatown neighborhood.

In the summer of 1972, Chinatown Kite Shop moved to 717 Grant Avenue, also in Chinatown. Albert managed to secure a new lease with bigger space and better location.
The business was officially Eastern Sea Inc dba Chinatown Kite Shop until 2009 when it was changed to Naresit Inc dba Chinatown Kite Shop.

b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.

1971 to Present: Albert Chang

Chinatown Kite Shop has always been family owned. The store has cradled two generations of the Chang family since it was established. Founder Albert Chang, alongside with his father (Paul K Chang), his mother (Jing Chang), and his brother (H S Chang) have all contributed a significant amount of time managing, operating, and helping out in the shop.

c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.

Chinatown Kite Shop ceased operations temporarily due to government-mandated closures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CRITERION 2: The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community

a. Describe the business' contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community, business sector, or San Francisco as a whole.

Chinatown Kite Shop is one of the oldest and longest-running kite shops in historic Chinatown. Over the years, current owner Albert Chang has been a strong advocate for the Chinatown community by educating his customers, especially young people in the Bay Area, about kites and their long history of cultural significance. For instance, kites are believed to have originated in China. In ancient times, kites played a role in providing military intelligence for the Chinese forces. Albert deeply hopes that his dedication and hard work will not only preserve and promote his own heritage, but also able to connect and instill cultural interest in future generations.

b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?

Since the Change family founded the shop, they have been actively involved in the Chinatown community. Albert Chang served for years on the board and as president of the SF Chinatown Merchants Association. He relentlessly spearheaded many major events, like the Moon Festival, a decades-old staple in Chinatown that helped boost foot traffic and increase sales for the local merchants.
In addition, Albert played a major role in facilitating Crissy Field’s 20th Anniversary with the National Park Service and Park Conservancy in May 2022. Despite all the hardship he encountered during the pandemic, Albert custom-made 1,500 kites for this particular event.

c. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

Chinatown Kite Shop has consistently participated in local fundraisers to benefit the neighborhood and has been a resource for community events such as the annual Chinatown Christmas event and the SF Chinatown Pop-Up Series in the Ferry Building in recent years.

d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?

Under Albert Chang’s ownership, the Chinatown Kite Shop has consistently earned recognition as one of the must-visit shops in San Francisco and the Bay Area. The shop received acclaim from many reputable travel guides, publications, and national TV stations.

Other mentions of Chinatown Kite Shop in social medias and publication are listed below:

- “Beloved SF Chinatown shops join pop-up series at Ferry Building”
  San Francisco Chronicle
  March 12, 2021

- “Ferry Building Showcases Chinatown Merchants”
  SF Weekly
  May 15, 2021

- “Crissy Field Is Giving Out Free Kites For Its 20th Anniversary On Saturday”
  Secret San Francisco
  May 6, 2022
  https://secretsanfrancisco.com/crissy-field-kite-day/

- “Kites fill sky at Crissy Field in celebration of park’s 20th renovation anniversary”
  San Francisco Chronicle
  May 7, 2022

- “Shopping, Dining and Culture in San Francisco’s Chinatown”
  San Francisco Travel
e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?

The business has not received any awards, recognition, or political commendations.

d. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

Chinatown Kite Shop has established a close-knit relationship with its community; its vibrant and colorful storefront has been well-embraced by locals and tourists. If the business were to be sold, relocated, or shut down, there will be a significant and irreplaceable loss to the Chinatown community – the locals and the tourists that purposely visit Chinatown Kite Shop for a unique shopping experience.

CRITERION 3: The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business

a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?

Grant Avenue in San Francisco is one of the oldest streets in the city’s Chinatown district. Chinatown Kite Shop is still using the same light box and signage from 30 years ago, both of which make Chinatown Kite Shop an eye-catching landmark. The exterior and interior of the store is decorated with colorful and attractive kites in different shapes and designs, ranging from traditional hand-painted Chinese paper kites, wood-and-paper biplanes, nylon or cotton windsock kite, to pentagonal kites.

b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.

Chinatown Kite Shop is committed to maintaining a wide variety of kite selections, good customer service, and unique shopping experience that makes Chinatown a special place to visit. There are no plans under the present ownership to change much of anything.

Since the business moved to its current location in 1972, it has established a great relationship with the landlord, Ong Ko Met Association. Albert Chang and his family took special care to ensure the storefront, especially the window display, was vibrant enough to attract new customers while maintaining its authenticity.
c. What challenges is the business facing today?

Unfortunately, Chinatown Kite Shop was targeted and terrorized by unidentified individuals in March 2020, immediately after the initial COVID-19 lockdown began: [https://nextshark.com/sf-chinatown-kite-shop-vanndalized/](https://nextshark.com/sf-chinatown-kite-shop-vanndalized/).


Despite these and other challenges, Chinatown Kite Shop hopes to continue in its current location with the neighborhood support it has had all these years, and for as long as conditions for maintaining a small business in San Francisco are valued.

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**Legacy Business Program staff will add the following details:**

**a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.**

Kite store.

**b. Other special features of the business location, such as if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.**

The historic resources of The Kite Shop location are classified by the San Francisco Planning Department as Category A, Historic Resource Present. The building is a contributor to the Chinatown Historic District. The district contains a concentration of shopping bazaars, art goods stores, and restaurants, which attract visitors and shoppers and contribute to the city’s visual and economic diversity. This district is intended to preserve the street’s present character and scale and to accommodate uses primarily appealing to visitors (e.g., tourist gifts shops, jewelry stores, art goods and food restaurants).
From a distance, the kites floating above Crissy Field Saturday looked like they might be birds, but as soon as Will Paulson saw what they were, the 4-year-old took off running, as fast as his legs could take him. Kites are awesome, he explained, “cuz they go super high.”

Will and his parents had come to the park on a whim, the perfect setting for a nice day. “We try to come often,” his mother, Chantal Paulson, said. “It’s just so pretty here … it’s just the best park.”

They hadn’t known that the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy was giving away free kites to mark the end of the park’s 20-year renovation anniversary, but soon enough they’d joined hundreds of others on the field, assembling kites and tossing them into the breeze — there was a good wind blowing, so it didn’t take much effort to get them “super high.” Will’s dad, Tony Paulson, remembers when the field was still a concrete air strip, before kids played on the green lawn and ducks swam in the restored marsh.

The conservancy has been celebrating the 20-year anniversary of the park all year long and the day of free kites was the final event — a callback to similar events that marked the park’s opening and its 10th anniversary.
Staff had 1,500 kites on hand and gave them out at a brisk pace, both to people who had planned to come and to others who stumbled upon the site of hundreds of people flying kites together with the Golden Gate Bridge as their backdrop.

Albert Chang, the owner of Chinatown Kite Shop for 50 years now, produced the kites. On Saturday afternoon, he watched them fly overhead. Crissy Field was the perfect place to fly a kite, he said, all flat and wide open. He wasn’t surprised the event had attracted so many participants.

“It’s easy. You get outdoors, fresh air, family,” he says. “Flying a kite doesn’t require a specific technique.”

Lots of people said it made them feel like kids again.

Neal Barrina had come from Hayward with Hillary Hoang. They’d found the event online. It was nice, Barrina said, to “watch everyone run around like kids. Honestly, it makes us feel like kids again.”

Hoang joked that it was a little “stressful” getting the kite into the sky.

“You’re very much at the mercy of the wind,” Barrina said.

Not far away, Stephen Lynch had come from the Richmond with his wife and 3-year-old daughter. She danced around the kite as her dad tried to achieve lift off.

“I had no idea what 1,500 kites would look like.” Maybe not all of them were flying, Lynch said, but “it’s pretty cool.”

Blanca Brosig and her roommates had read about the free kites online, too, on a list of fun and cheap things to do.

“It’s a beautiful day and that’s rare in San Francisco,” she said. Spending an afternoon flying kites turned out to be “so much fun. It’s so nice to get out and be around people.” Everybody was friendly and in a good mood, she said. Some person she’d never met had helped her assemble the kite, when they saw her struggling.

Brosig looked around at the field, the kites in the sky and the sailboats in the bay. “It’s beautiful,” she said.
HEARING DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2022

Filing Date: October 19, 2022
Case No.: 2022-010322LBR
Business Name: Chinatown Kite Shop
Business Address: 717 Grant Avenue
Zoning: CVR (Chinatown Visitor Retail) Zoning District 50-N Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0225/005
Applicant: Albert Chang
717 Grant Avenue
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Tolu Atoyebi - (628) 652-7363
sydney.atoyebi@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description
Situated along the colorful and iconic Grant Avenue, Chinatown Kite Shop is one of the longest-running, family-owned kite shops in historic Chinatown. It was established in 1971 by resident and community leader, Albert Chang, who opened Chinatown Kite Shop as a means to support his family, while also celebrating and uplifting the significance of kites in Chinese culture. Since then, Chinatown Kite Shop has grown to become a quintessential business and a staple of Chinese culture in San Francisco. It is well-recognized and regarded for its vibrant storefront, unique shopping experience, and strong relationships with its community.

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dancing dragons, Chinese costumes, lanterns, feng shui items, animal hats and umbrellas, Chinese New Year decorations and calendars, collectible art tiles, mobile device cases, party items, and woks.

More broadly, Chinatown Kite Shop has been an invaluable resource to the community, providing products and services at community events and local fundraisers; a feat that had become increasingly challenging for small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, in recent years, Chinatown Kite Shop played a major role in the annual Chinatown Winter Wonderland festival and the Chinatown Pop-Up Series fundraiser in the Ferry Building. Furthermore, in May 2022, the National Park Service and Park Conservancy commissioned 1,500 custom-made kites from Chinatown Kite Shop for Crissy Field’s 20th Anniversary.

The success of Chinatown Kite Shop is largely due to the values of kinship and community that the Chang family and staff have cultivated over five decades. Albert Chang is a strong advocate for the Chinatown community and educates his customers, especially young people, about kites and their long history of cultural significance in China. As a result of Chang’s dedication and advocacy, Chinatown Kite Shop continues to preserve and promote important elements of Chinese heritage and instill cultural interest in future generations. By the same token, Chinatown Kite Shop is continuously committed to preserving its location along historic Grant Avenue, 30-year-old lightbox and signage, and its one-of-a-kind facade and interior adorned with a myriad of charming and exquisite kites.

The business’s primary location at 717 Grant Avenue is in a Category A (Historic Resource Present) structure on the west side of Grant Avenue between Clay Street and Sacramento Street in the Chinatown neighborhood. It is within the Chinatown Visitor Retail (CVR) Zoning District and a 50-N Height and Bulk District. It is also located within the Chinatown planning area.

**Staff Analysis**

**Review Criteria**

1. *When was business founded?*

   The business was founded in 1971.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

   Yes. Chinatown Kite Shop qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

   a. Chinatown Kite Shop has operated continuously in San Francisco for 51 years.

   b. Chinatown Kite Shop has contributed to the history and identity of the Chinatown neighborhood and San Francisco.

   c. Chinatown Kite Shop is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.
3. **Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?**

Yes. The business is associated with the Chinese tradition of kite crafting and flying.

4. **Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?**

Yes. The site is located within the Chinatown Historic District which encompasses the area historically and popularly identified as the heart of the Chinese community. The area is broadly associated with the settlement of San Francisco’s earliest Chinese immigrants in the 17th century and is architecturally significant for its concentration of buildings constructed after the 1906 earthquake. Chinatown’s architecture is characterized by two- to four-story masonry buildings that “applied Chinese styles of architectural detailing to standard early 20th Century buildings.” (Historic Resource Evaluation Response: Case No. 2016-010671ENV)

Additionally, the three-story, mixed-use property encompassing Chinatown Kite Shop has also been the primary office and headquarters for the Ong Ko Met Association since 1951, who purchased the property at 715-719 Grant Avenue in that same year. Established in San Francisco in 1877, the Ong Ko Met Benevolent Association formed to secure the safety of Chinese Americans and fight for the rights of Chinese immigrants during a period marked by Anti-Chinese discrimination and violence. The association continues to utilize and lease the space with the renewed mission to preserve and exhibit Chinese art, culture, and history.

5. **Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?**

While the property at 717 Grant Avenue is not yet listed in a Historic Resource Registry, it is located in the Chinatown Historic District which has been formally determined eligible for the National and California Register. The National Register Survey (1997) gave the property at 717 Grant Avenue a Survey Rating of “3D” (Eligible for National Register as a contributor to a National Register eligible district through survey evaluation).

Additionally, the subject property is identified in the Chinatown Survey (1994) as a C (Contributory) property, and in the Foundation For San Francisco Architectural Heritage Historic Survey (1978) as a B*, which classifies the property as having “Major Importance.”

6. **Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?**

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

7. **Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?**

Yes. There have been a number of reputable local and national news sources revering Chinatown Kite Shop as one of San Francisco’s must-visit places; and recognizing its contribution to the Chinatown neighborhood and San Francisco at large. In the last 10 years, Chinatown Kite Shop has been the subject of articles by the San Francisco Chronicle, SF Weekly, Secret San Francisco, SF Gate, and San Francisco Travel. The business has also been referenced in publications by ABC News and NBC Bay Area.

**Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business**

**Location(s) associated with the business:**

Current Locations:
- 717 Grant Avenue (1972 – Present)
Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 601 Grant Avenue (1971 – 1972)

**Recommended by Applicant**

- Light-Box and Signage.
- Vibrant and Colorful Storefront Window Display.
- Traditional Hand-Crafted Chinese Kites.
- Legacy of Family Ownership.

**Additional Recommended by Staff**

- None

**Basis for Recommendation**

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Draft Resolution
Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
  - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
  - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
  - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation
ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR CHINATOWN KITE SHOP CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 717 GRANT AVENUE, BLOCK/LOT 0225/005.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City’s history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on November 16, 2022, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends that Chinatown Kite Shop qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Chinatown Kite Shop.

**Location(s):**
- Current Locations:
  - 717 Grant Avenue (1972 – Present)
- Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:
  - 601 Grant Avenue (1971 – 1972)

**Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:**
- Light-Box and Signage.
- Vibrant and Colorful Storefront Window Display.
- Traditional Hand-Crafted Chinese Kites.
- Legacy of Family Ownership.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission’s findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business’s eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file to the Office of Small Business November 16, 2022.

Jonas P. Ionin
*Commission Secretary*

**AYE:** Wright, Black, Johns, So, Nageswaran

**NOES:** None

**ABSENT:** Foley, Matsuda

**ADOPTED:** November 16, 2022