

Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 22, 2018

BALBOA THEATRE

Application No.: LBR-2018-19-007
Business Name: Balboa Theatre
Business Address: 3630 Balboa Street
District: District 1
Applicant: Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker, Owner/Operator
Nomination Date: July 17, 2018
Nominated By: Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The Balboa Theatre (“the Balboa”) opened on February 27, 1926. The original owner, Samuel H. Levin, hired renowned architects James and Merritt Reid to design and build a neighborhood theater to service the Outer Richmond district. It was originally called the “New Balboa” in order to distinguish it from a theater with the same name in the Sunset district. The theater was more modest than some of the theaters designed by the Reid Brothers and made to blend in with the more suburban surroundings of the neighborhood. It had one large auditorium which sat approximately 800 people.

The Balboa was owned by the Levin family until the 1970s. In 1978, it was converted into a two-screen theater. Gary Meyer bought the business in 2004 and sold it to current owners Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker on January 1, 2012. Under the guidance of Gary Meyer, and then Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker, the theater has become a focal point for the neighborhood, both physically and culturally. The creative and inclusive programming provides entertainment for diverse audiences and promotes a lively atmosphere for neighborhood patrons and visiting guests. Today, the Balboa Theatre shows a combination of first-run feature films and themed screenings, along with family-friendly movies every Saturday morning and classic films on Thursday evenings.

The business is located on the north side of Balboa Street between 37th and 38th avenues in the Outer Richmond neighborhood.

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

3630 Balboa Street from 1926 to Present (92 years)



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

Yes, the applicant has contributed to the Outer Richmond neighborhood's history and identity.

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 Balboa Theatre is associated with the neighborhood theater tradition. It was originally designed as a combination theater that could exhibit both motion pictures and vaudeville shows.
- Balboa Theatre has contributed to the history and identity of San Francisco by serving as a neighborhood theater.
- Balboa Theatre is associated with prominent San Francisco movie theater developer Samuel Levin.
- Balboa Theatre is a work of master architects the Reid Brothers and it represents the early 20th century neighborhood combination movie theater building type. The Balboa Theatre's design was modest compared to most of the other local theaters the Reid Brothers had built. The exterior of the building is reminiscent of a Spanish mission. The lobby is inspired by Art Deco. Many of the interior features are reminiscent of the "Alhambra" style of architecture, including some nice ornate cut outs in the walls where posters can hang. Subsequent decorations inside the theater lobby have honored the Alhambra style by using the mosque-style corners on the cut outs in other areas of the theater.
- Balboa Theatre is associated with neighborhood theater development in San Francisco. Located in commercial corridors, the city's theaters are associated with the expansion of the film industry after the turn of the 20th century and reflect the cultural and economic development of San Francisco. The Balboa Theater is one of 23 contributing theaters to a potentially eligible non-contiguous multiple property historic district. The period of significance for the district spans 1906-1945.
- The property has a Planning Department Historic Resource status of "B" (Properties Requiring Further Consultation and Review) as the building was constructed in 1925 and has not been formally evaluated. The Balboa Theatre is listed in the Draft San Francisco Neighborhood Movie Theater Non-Contiguous Multiple Property Historic District Context Statement, prepared in 2006 by Andrew Murray and Katie Tom for the Board of Supervisors. The report provides background information about the neighborhood theater typology in San Francisco but provides little specific information about Balboa Theatre.
- The Balboa Theatre has been featured a number of times in the San Francisco Chronicle, as well as the Richmond District Blog, Hoodline Magazine, Via Magazine, Sunset Magazine and Cinema Treasures.

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

Yes, Balboa Theatre is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Balboa Theatre 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.





SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Marquee.
- Primary façade with shaped parapet, window openings, central and recessed entrance, and flanking storefront openings.
- Blade sign.
- Interior spaces, including the ticketing area, lobby, and original auditorium volume.
- Original interior ornamental features.
- Film programming.

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.

- Theater.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Balboa Theatre currently located at 3630 Balboa Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Program Manager
Legacy Business Program



Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 22, 2018

BALBOA THEATRE

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. _____

Application No.: LBR-2018-19-007
Business Name: Balboa Theatre
Business Address: 3630 Balboa Street
District: District 1
Applicant: Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker, Owner/Operator
Nomination Date: July 17, 2018
Nominated By: Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR BALBOA THEATRE, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 3630 BALBOA STREET.

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 in 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 October 22, 2018, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore





SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

BE IT RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Balboa Theatre 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 Balboa Theatre:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Marquee.
• Primary façade with shaped parapet, window openings, central and recessed entrance, and flanking storefront openings.
• Blade sign.
• Interior spaces, including the ticketing area, lobby, and original auditorium volume.
• Original interior ornamental features.
• Film programming.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Balboa Theatre on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Theater.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on October 22, 2018.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

- Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –





SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2018-19-007
Business Name: Balboa Theatre
Business Address: 3630 Balboa Street
District: District 1
Applicant: Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker, Owner/Operator
Nomination Date: July 17, 2018
Nominated By: Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer

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? Yes No

3630 Balboa Street from 1926 to Present (92 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community? 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? Yes No

NOTES: N/A

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: September 19, 2018

Richard Kurylo
Manager, Legacy Business Program



Member, Board of Supervisors
District 1



City and County of San Francisco

SANDRA LEE FEWER

李麗嫦 市參事

July 17, 2018

Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Legacy Business Program
City and County of San Francisco
Office of Small Business
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 110
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Nomination of Balboa Theater to the Legacy Business Registry

Dear Director Dick-Endrizzi,

I write with the distinct pleasure of nominating the Balboa Theatre to the Legacy Business Registry. The Balboa Theater is among San Francisco's oldest operating movie theaters; it has screened everything from silent films to modern classics for over 90 years, after being constructed in 1926. Impressively, the Balboa Theatre has maintained art-deco elements in the lobby and has lovingly restored the marquee that lights up the Outer Balboa corridor. The Balboa is a true gem and is a local neighborhood theatre that is maintaining its identity and local color in times where corporate cinemas and movie-streaming are changing the industry. It is home to two cozy showing rooms, and a myriad of special screenings and double features. Balboa Theater has regularly hosted community events that are a draw for residents and visitors alike, such as the Bengali Film Fest and Bay Area Godzilla Night.

The Balboa Theatre also has the distinction of being part of the SF Neighborhood Theater Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit which helps preserve and maintain other neighborhood movie theaters in the city. The Balboa Theater has grown into a Richmond District centerpiece, where generations of families and friends have gathered for the latest blockbusters and classics alike. Today, the weekly 'Popcorn Palace' Saturday morning features are a popular outing for many Richmond District families.

I believe that the Balboa Theatre would benefit greatly from being a part of San Francisco's Legacy Business Registry.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Sandra Lee Fewer

Sandra Lee Fewer

City Hall • 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place • Room 244 • San Francisco, California 94102-4689 • (415) 554-7410
Fax(415)554-7415 • TDD/TTY(415)554-5227 • E-mail:Sandra.Fewer@sfgov.org

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:		
BALBOA THEATER		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
ADAM BERGERON JAIMI HOLKER		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
3630 BALBOA ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94121		(415) 221-3117
		EMAIL:
		ADAM@CINEMASF.COM
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
BALBOAMOVIES.COM	FACEBOOK.COM/BALBOATHEATRESF	

APPLICANT'S NAME	
ADAM BERGERON & JAIMI HOLKER	<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
OWNER / OPERATOR	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	EMAIL:
	ADAM@CINEMASF.COM

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):
0465300	C3931772

OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff	
NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:

Section Two:

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. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
3630 BALBOA ST	94121	FEB 27, 1926
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	2/27/1926 TO PRESENT	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

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 and a business deemed not current in 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 the Business Assistance Grant.

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.

ADAM BERGERON

Name (Print):

7/22/18

Date:

Signature: 

BALBOA THEATRE

Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

The Balboa Theatre (“the Balboa”) opened its doors at 3630 Balboa Street in San Francisco on February 27, 1926. The original owner, Samuel H. Levin, hired renowned architects James and Merritt Reid to design and build a neighborhood theater to service the Outer Richmond district. It was originally called the “New Balboa” in order to distinguish it from a theater with the same name in the Sunset district. The theater was more modest than some of the theaters designed by the Reid Brothers and made to blend in with the more suburban surroundings of the neighborhood. It had one large auditorium which sat almost 800 people.

In the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s the “New Balboa” got feature films a week or so after they opened on Market Street, and generally played films for a few days, often having multiple movies each day. On Wednesday and Thursday nights, patrons got one piece of china with their admission, and could have a complete 52 piece set of dinnerware over the course of a year. A poster advertising this is still framed and on display at the theater. In time, the name was changed to the Balboa Theatre.

The Balboa was owned by the Levin family until the 1970s, at which point it changed hands a few times but remained continually open. In 1978, it was converted into a two screen theater. Gary Meyer bought the business in 2004 and sold it to current owners Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker on January 1, 2012.

Under the guidance of Gary Meyer, and then Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker, the theater has become a focal point for the neighborhood, both physically and culturally. The prominent neon marquee, which has been meticulously maintained to look just as it did in the 1930s, defines the business district in the outer Balboa Street corridor and creates a hub around which there is a vibrant restaurant, café and bar social scene which is aided by the popularity of the movies shown at the theater. The creative and inclusive programming provides entertainment for people from all walks of life and promotes a lively atmosphere for neighborhood patrons and visiting guests alike. Every effort is made to provide a wide range of movie offerings so that all people in the Outer Richmond and the entire city feel included and can find something they like.

We at the Balboa Theatre are committed to keeping the theater alive and vibrant. We hope to continue to provide movies and fun to the neighborhood for many years to come.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

The business has been open continuously since 1926.

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

The Balboa Theatre was owned by the Levin family until the 1970s and is now owned by husband and wife Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker.

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

A history of the business ownership is as follows:

1926 to 2001:	Samuel H. Levin and the Levin Family Trust
2001 to 2011:	Gary Meyer
2012 to Present:	Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker

The Balboa Theatre's original owner was theater operator Samuel H. Levin. It was an era when new movie houses seemed to be popping up every month. "Most of these theaters were operated by the same few families, like the Levins," explains Alfonso Felder, president of the San Francisco Neighborhood Theater Foundation (SFNTF)."¹

"Over the next few decades, the Balboa would survive the boom of multiplex theaters that threatened and ultimately claimed many of its contemporaries, including the neighboring Alexandria and Coliseum. It stayed in business thanks to a succession of devoted owners, starting with local film enthusiast Gary Meyer. Under Meyer's watch, the theater underwent a series of much-needed renovations. It also began hosting events and themed programming, which brought in a new wave of interest. In 2012, Meyer passed the reins to Adam Bergeron and his wife, Jaimi Holker, who continue to own and operate the Balboa as part of CinemaSF."²

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years is included in the Legacy Business Registry application.

¹ Nikki Collister, Hoodline, *The Story Of The Outer Richmond's Historic Balboa Theatre*, June 1, 2016.

² Ibid.

f. Note any 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 Balboa Theatre's design was modest compared to most of the other local theaters the Reid Brothers had built. The exterior of the building is reminiscent of a Spanish mission. The lobby is inspired by Art Deco. Many of the interior features are reminiscent of the "Alhambra" style of architecture, including some nice ornate cut outs in the walls where posters can hang. Subsequent decorations inside the theater lobby have honored the Alhambra style by using the mosque-style corners on the cut outs in other areas of the theater.

The historic resource status of the building at 3630 Balboa Street is classified by the Planning Department as "Category B" (Unknown / Age Eligible) with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act.

CRITERION 2

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

"As one of the city's oldest operating movie theaters, the Balboa has provided entertainment to generations of San Franciscans over the years, screening everything from silent films to summer blockbusters to cult classics. Its location at 38th Avenue means it's not always the most convenient place to catch a flick, unless you live in the area. But for many city dwellers, the 90-year-old theater is a local favorite, and a lasting remnant of the days when neighborhood theaters were king."³

"In its early days, the Balboa was a destination for eager moviegoers to see the latest silent films, with a single auditorium that sat up to 800 people. Along with nearby Richmond venues the Alexandria and the Coliseum, the New Balboa found success by providing the city's westside residents with an ever-changing rotation of popular films. Over the years, the theater saw the transition of film from silent to sound, from black and white to vibrant Technicolor. It also adopted its present name after the original Balboa became the Westwood. As the movie industry evolved, the small Richmond establishment adjusted its offerings, but kept its core business model the same"⁴

Today, the Balboa Theatre shows a combination of first-run feature films and themed screenings, along with family-friendly movies every Saturday morning and classic films on Thursday evenings.⁵

³ Nikki Collister, Hoodline, *The Story Of The Outer Richmond's Historic Balboa Theatre*, June 1, 2016.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

The Balboa Theater hosts many specialty events geared towards keeping the theater programming original and interesting for the neighborhood constituents. There are “Balboa Classics” on Thursday nights, showing a wide range of classic films. Ani-Mondays present a different animated feature each third Monday of the month. Rewind Wednesday presents movies of the 80s and 90s on VHS. There is a monthly music documentary series on the last Wednesday of the month. On Saturday and Sunday mornings there is often children's movies presented at a discount rate (\$10 admission, which includes popcorn and a drink). These include either new releases which are family-friendly, or classic kids movies from throughout movie history. The Balboa also takes great pride in premiering local filmmakers. Strephon Taylor of November Fire Films has premiered six films at the Balboa, including Playland-At-The-Beach, Sutra's: The Palace At Land's End, San Francisco Cable Cars, The Cliff House and the upcoming I Believe In Halloween.

The Balboa Theatre participates in the annual Playland-on-Balboa music festival. The free event brings local makers, food vendors, musicians and family-friendly fun to Balboa Street between 35th and 38th avenues, which is closed to street traffic from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. In the second year of the event in 2018, the Balboa had a free 10 a.m. screening of cartoons for children followed by two films by Strephon Taylor, "Sutra's: The Palace at Land's End," and "Playland at the Beach," a look at the former amusement park that was once the area's main attraction.⁶

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

The Balboa Theater has been featured a number of times in the San Francisco Chronicle, as well as the Richmond District Blog, Hoodline Magazine, Via Magazine, Sunset Magazine and Cinema Treasures.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

Previous owner Gary Meyer was one of the founders of Landmark Theaters, a nationwide chain of arthouse theaters.

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

The Balboa Theatre is home to discounted movies for kids on Saturday mornings, discounted or free school screenings throughout the school year, birthday parties, educational screenings, classic film screenings, film festivals, double features, seasonally-themed screenings, jazz music screening events and much more.

⁶ Nicole Newman, Hoodline, *Outer Richmond music festival returns for 2nd year*, July 25, 2018.

The theater works with the Balboa Village Merchants Association, the San Francisco Neighborhood Theater Foundation, the Richmond District Neighborhood Center and many other local organizations.

The Balboa Theater donates packs of tickets to all San Francisco Public Schools to be used for auction purposes, and regularly hosts fundraising screenings for Lafayette Elementary, and Argonne School. The Balboa hosts an annual fundraising event for Sunset Co-operative Nursery School. The Balboa also hosts events for elderly people with Alzheimer's Disease three times a year.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

The Balboa Theater serves the Richmond District, which is a rich and diverse neighborhood. The constituency includes young children and their families, the elderly and all points in between. The theater is equipped with the latest in Assisted Listening Devices, so the theater is accessible for the blind or the deaf or people with any disabilities.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

The Balboa Theater marquee has come to signify the Outer Richmond District and serves as a symbol of the area. It is a large point of pride for many Richmond residents.

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

The Balboa Theatre is one of the very last neighborhood theaters still operating in San Francisco.

If the Balboa Theatre were to close, San Francisco would lose a very important link to its past, and a vibrant community center. It is a place where people of all races, genders and ages meet and enjoy an innocent entertainment event. It is a place where neighborhood schools and camps can count on for fundraising and a place to take students as a prize for their job well done.

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

The Balboa Theatre was built by Samuel H. Levin as part of his chain of neighborhood theatres known as San Francisco Theatres Inc. It opened as the New Balboa Theatre on February 27, 1926, with a seating capacity for 800. It was designed by brothers James & Merritt Reid, renowned architects who also designed the Cliff House, Fairmont Hotel, Spreckels Temple of Music in Golden Gate Park and many other theatres in the Bay Area. The Balboa Theatre was

remodeled after a 1940s fire. By the 1960s, the Balboa Theatre had very long runs of blockbuster films, at popular prices, including 92 weeks in 1966 and 1967 for “The Sound of Music,” which followed the roadshow engagement at the United Artists Theatre on Market Street. After another fire in 1978, the theater was twinned.

The theater was run by the Levin family for almost 60 years until February 2001. At that time the Balboa Theatre, which was showing second-run films, underwent a renaissance thanks to the efforts by the co-owner of Landmark Theatres chain, Gary Meyer, who leased it from the Levin family. Meyer showed quality second-run films at very reasonable prices and his efforts built a buzz around town. He renovated the theatre and included revival and film festival screenings. He later switched to first-run films.

Meyer ran the theater as a labor of love, but after a decade felt it was time for a change. The master lease was turned over to the San Francisco Neighborhood Theatre Foundation in late 2011 under a lease lasting through 2024. In February 2012, Meyer stepped down from being in charge. The Balboa Theatre is now part of the new CinemaSF organization.

The Balboa Theatre has 307 seats in auditorium 1 and 226 seats in auditorium 2. Both auditoriums have been equipped with Dolby 5.1 sound systems since 2013.⁷

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

The present owners are committed to maintaining the business as a theater. “With a small theater like this, it's really a labor of love, something you do because you enjoy it,” said owner Adam Bergeron, noting that neighborhood theaters are not the most lucrative businesses to operate.⁸

In 2013, the Balboa was given a deadline by distribution companies to convert its projectors from film to digital. After January 1, 2014, they would stop making 35mm films, and everything would need to be converted to digital. Without meeting the distribution companies’ requirements, the Balboa Theatre couldn't show new movies. The costly upgrade compounded the existing financial strains of small theaters across the city, leaving many of them with no choice but to close their doors after decades of operation. If it couldn't make the leap, the Balboa faced a similar fate. So the Balboa Theatre launched a Kickstarter campaign to raise money for the digital conversion. The result far exceeded expectations: a total of 1,063 supporters raised over \$100,000, with backers coming from as far as Germany. The Balboa is now fully equipped with digital projection and surround sound. It shows a combination of first

⁷ Cinema Treasures, <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/725>.

⁸ Nikki Collister, Hoodline, *The Story Of The Outer Richmond's Historic Balboa Theatre*, June 1, 2016.

run feature films and themed screenings, along with family-friendly movies every Saturday morning and classic films on Thursday evenings.⁹

The main goal of the San Francisco Neighborhood Theater Foundation is to continue to have the Balboa Theatre as a great resource for the people in the Richmond. SFNTF wants to ensure the theater can serve the neighborhood for many years to come.¹⁰

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

The beautiful Balboa Theater marquee requires constant maintenance. Due to its proximity to the ocean, the neon needs repairing approximately three times a year. The underside of the marquee has 24 fluorescent bulbs which all had to have their ballasts replaced in July of 2018. The marquee still operates in the original analog system that it had in 1926, in which a click system creates the B-A-L-B-O-A sequence which is such a delight for the neighborhood. That system requires regular maintenance and is a great example of an old technology that can continue to exist if properly maintained.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

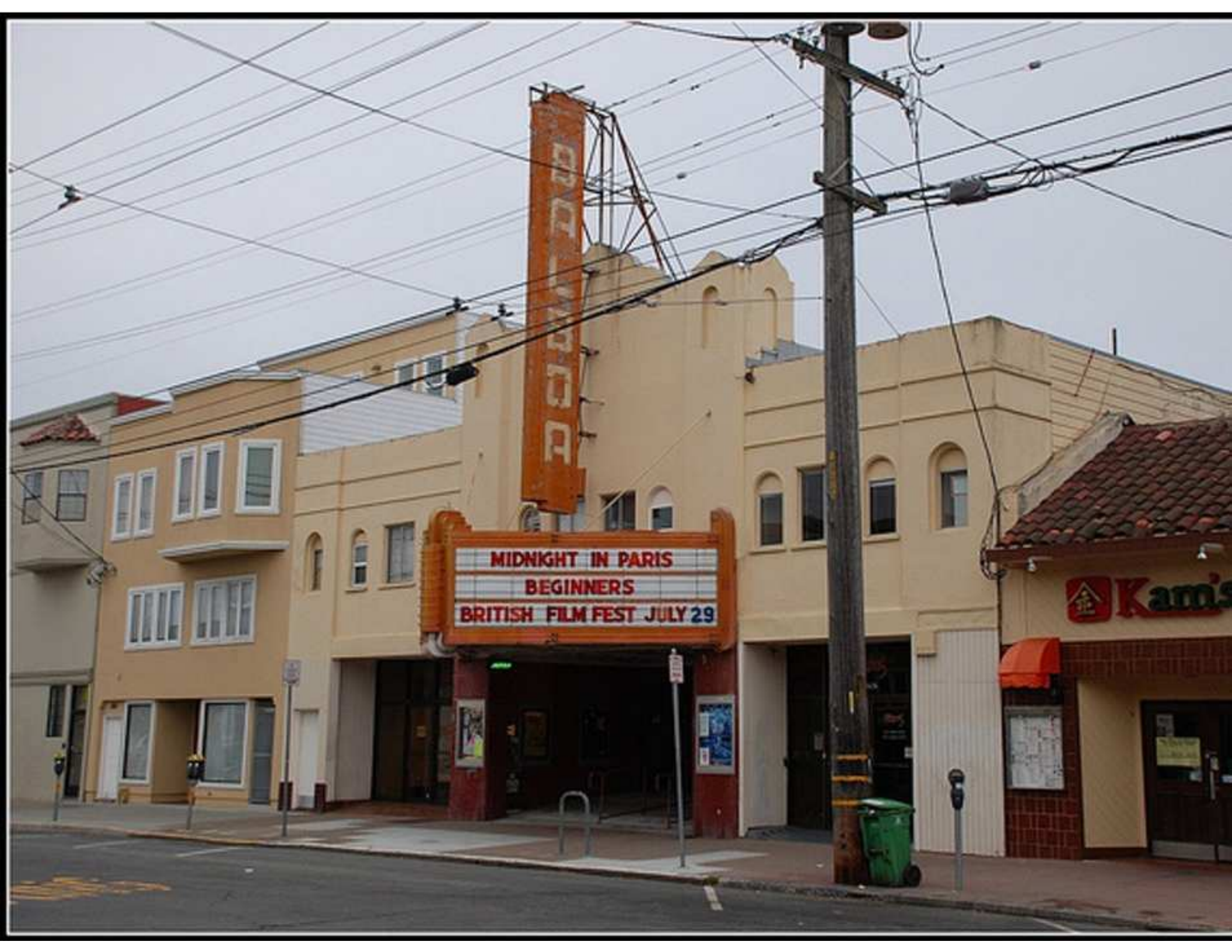
The Balboa Theatre has been maintained as a theater since it opened in 1926.

⁹ Nikki Collister, Hoodline, *The Story Of The Outer Richmond's Historic Balboa Theatre*, June 1, 2016.

¹⁰ Ibid.







REGENCY

MIDNIGHT IN PARIS
BEGINNERS
BRITISH FILM FEST JULY 29

Kam's

BALBOA

MADAGASCAR 3
SNOW WHITE AND
THE HUNTSMAN





REGAL

MADAGASCAR 3
SNOW WHITE AND
THE HUNTSMAN



CONCESSIONS	
POPCORN	Children Skatopop 1.00
Small 1.50	Wag Swatopop 1.50
Med 2.00	Jumbo Hot 2.00
Large 2.50	Small 1.50
XL 3.00	Med 2.00
SOFT DRINKS	Small 1.50
Small 1.50	Med 2.00
Med 2.00	Large 2.50
Large 2.50	XL 3.00
ICE CREAM	Small 1.50
Small 1.50	Med 2.00
Med 2.00	Large 2.50
Large 2.50	XL 3.00
CHOCOLATE	Small 1.50
Small 1.50	Med 2.00
Med 2.00	Large 2.50
Large 2.50	XL 3.00
CANDY	Small 1.50
Small 1.50	Med 2.00
Med 2.00	Large 2.50
Large 2.50	XL 3.00
COOKIES	Small 1.50
Small 1.50	Med 2.00
Med 2.00	Large 2.50
Large 2.50	XL 3.00

TAKE
- your own -
PHOTOS



*Gets you two prints
and a wonderful*

-MEMORY-

TODAY'S PICTURE
Tomorrow's treasure

HIGH POWERED
ELECTRIC FLASH

- TWO -
COPIES
per session

TAKE
- your own -
PHOTOS



*Gets you two prints
and a wonderful*

-MEMORY-

TODAY'S PICTURE
Tomorrow's treasure

HIGH POWERED
ELECTRIC FLASH

- TWO -
COPIES
per session



FREE
HOT
TEA
WATER
WED
THUR



CONC

CONCESSIONS

POPCORN
child \$5.00
small \$6.00
medium \$6.50
large \$7.75 → 1 FREE REFILL

Soft Pretzel \$5
Chicken Sausage \$6
Veg Sausage \$6
Jumbo hot dog \$6
Nachos \$6
Xtra cheese \$1.50

SODA
small \$4.50
medium \$5.00
large \$5.50 → 1 FREE REFILL
CAPRI-SUN \$1.50

Jalapenos
ICE CREAM \$5
CANDY \$4 - \$5

BOTTLED WATER, COFFEE, TEA \$3

BEER SELECTION!! \$6 + \$8

IPAS
 * BREWERY OF THE YEAR
 * BEER OF THE YEAR
 * BEAR BEAR BEER
 * VILLAGER
 * ANIMAL
 * BIG DADDY
 * DOUBLE DADDY
 * POUNDING GROUND

ALES
 * RESERVE
 * WESTFALIA
 * LIBERTY
 * WHEAT
 * ANCHOR MANGO
 * FT. POINT PARK
 * HELL
 * HIGHWATER
 * MELON

LAGER
 * MIGHTY
 * CAT
 * MIGHTY
 * ANCHOR CALI
 * FRUIT SANDY
 * SHAKEN
 * RADLE
 * MOON BEAR STOUT

OTHER
 * KOSCH
 * PILSNER
 * KAVALI
 * TRUMET

LARGE \$7.75
 MEDIUM \$6.50
 SMALL \$6.00
 CHILD \$5.00



WARNING
IT'S-IT
\$5.00

Hand-drawn sign with text 'Na 6' and 'STUFF' and illustrations of food items.





\$20



**NEW
T-SHIRTS
NOW
AVAILABLE**

Design by great friend of the theater, Kayla! Check out more of Kayla's art on Instagram: **@kaylaconyer**

WED. THUR.

FREE

TO THE
LADIES

**HOT
OVEN
WARE**

every

WED.

and

THUR.

New BALBOA

OPENING TIME → Evenings: 6:40 to 11 - Sundays and Holidays: Continuous Show 1:15 to 11

THEATRE
BALBOA STREET at 38TH AVE.

• Phone SKYline 7000 •

Doors Open Sat. at 6:00 P. M.

PROGRAM FOR AUGUST, 1935

Subject to Change Without Notice



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
JULY 28 GARY COOPER - ANNA STEN in THE WEDDING NIGHT CHAS. BUTTERWORTH - UNA MERKEL in BABY FACE HARRINGTON	29	30	31 GEORGE ARLISS in CARDINAL RICHELIEU MONA BARRIE - GILBERT ROLAND in LADIES LOVE DANGER SPECIAL MATINEE WEDNESDAY AT 1:15	AUG. 1	2	3 JOHN BEAL GLORIA STUART in LADDIE CONRAD NAGEL in DEATH FLIES EAST BANK NITE
4 WILLIAM POWELL - GINGER ROGERS in STAR OF MIDNIGHT KAREN MORLEY - TOM KEENE in OUR DAILY BREAD	5	6	7 CHARLES LAUGHTON MARY BOLAND in RUGGLES OF RED GAP With Charles Ruggles - Zasu Pitts SPECIAL MATINEE WEDNESDAY AT 1:15	8	9	10 WARNER OLAND in CHARLIE CHAN IN EGYPT ROBERT YOUNG EVELYN VENABLE in VAGABOND LADY BANK NITE
11 JEANETTE MacDONALD NELSON EDDY in VICTOR HERBERT'S THRILLING STAGE SUCCESS NAUGHTY MARIETTA OUR GANG COMEDY	12	13 WILLIAM POWELL - JEAN HARLOW FRANCHOT TONE - MAY ROBSON in RECKLESS WITH Ted Healy - Nat Pendleton SPECIAL MATINEE WEDNESDAY AT 1:15	14	15	16 MAY ROBSON PRESTON FOSTER in Strangers All ANN SOTHERN - RALPH BELLAMY in Eight Bells BANK NITE SATURDAY	17
18 RICHARD ARLEN - VIRGINIA BRUCE ALICE BRADY in LET 'EM HAVE IT JAN KIEPURA in MY HEART IS CALLING	19	20	21 VICTOR McLAGLEN in THE INFORMER JEAN ARTHUR in PARTY WIRE SPECIAL MATINEE WEDNESDAY AT 1:15	22	23 CHARLES BOYER MERLE OBERON in THUNDER IN THE EAST BEN BERNIE AND ALL HIS LADS in STOLEN HARMONY BANK NITE SATURDAY	24
25 CHARLES RUGGLES - MARY BOLAND in PEOPLE WILL TALK MARLENE DIETRICH - LIONEL ATWILL in The Devil Is A Woman	26	27	28 FAY WRAY - RALPH BELLAMY in Woman In the Dark (BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE THIN MAN") FRANZ SCHUBERT'S Unfinished Symphony (THE ROMANCE OF FRANZ SCHUBERT)	29	30	31 PRESTON FOSTER LILA LEE in THE PEOPLE'S ENEMY ANNE SHIRLEY in CHASING YESTERDAY BANK NITE

PERMIT No. 16

SUGAR BOWL PASTRY SHOPPE — 3640 Balboa Street — Phone BAYview 4185
Full Line of Assorted Fancy Cakes, French Pastries, Delicious Coffee Cakes, Pies and Cookies


[HOME](#)
[BLOG](#)
[EVENTS](#)
[THEATRES](#)
[HISTORY](#)


A BRIEF HISTORY OF NEIGHBORHOOD THEATERS IN SAN FRANCISCO

Most of San Francisco's neighborhood movie theaters opened between 1910 and 1930 as new neighborhoods blossomed along streetcar lines that radiated out from the center of the city. Many of the oldest theaters were built in the inner neighborhoods and were small, gem-sized theatres like the like the Clay on Fillmore Street. Larger neighborhood theaters were developed in the late teens and twenties including theaters like the New Mission, Alexandria and Metro.

Most of San Francisco's neighborhood theaters were built by a small group of enterprising local theatre operators who each developed their own small circuits of neighborhood theaters. The most

DOWNTOWN / TENDERLOIN

Market Street

Theaters [Photos](#) | [History](#)

NORTH BEACH / CHINATOWN / RUSSIAN HILL

Alhambra Theatre [Photos](#) | [History](#)

Royal Theatre [Photos](#) | [History](#)

Pagoda Palace

Theatre [Photos](#) | [History](#)

WESTERN ADDITION

Uptown Theatre [Photos](#) | [History](#)

prominant San Francisco theater operators were Samuel H. Levin whose theaters included the Metro, Balboa and Harding Theatres, Abraham Nasser whose holdings included the Alhambra, Castro and Royal Theatres and Louis Greenfield who owned both the New Fillmore and New Mission Theatres. Other operators owned theatres throughout the City, but most of the City's neighborhood theaters were owned by one of a half dozen operators.

For most of the first half of the 20th century, San Francisco's neighborhood theaters were primarily second and third-run houses that featured films only after they had completed their runs at one of the large, studio-operated Market Street theaters. Large neighborhood theaters like the New Mission occassionally featured first-run films, but most neighborhood theaters screened second-run films exclusively until after anti-trust action wrestled the downtown theatres free from the control of the Hollywood studios and shook up the film-exhibition industry.

In the 1950s movie theaters accross the country struggled to compete with television and central city theatres struggled as populations shifted to outlying suburban areas. In San Francisco, the glory of many of the Market Street theaters began to fade and it would not be long before these theaters ceased to operate as film venues. Many neighborhood theaters held on, sometimes shifting to first-run programming or to screening foreign films. As the multi-plex craze began to hit the country, a number of neighborhood theaters were twinned or tri-plexed in an effort to keep them competetive with more modern, multi-screen suburban complexes with plenty of parking.

Fortunately, the population density of San Francisco provided many neighborhood theaters with large audiences long after similar theaters in other cities had closed their doors. The lack of avaiable land in

New Fillmore
Theatre Photos | History

Harding Theatre Photos | History

MARINA / PACIFIC HEIGHTS

Metro Theatre Photos | History

Clay Theatre Photos | History

Vogue Theatre Photos | History

RICHMOND DISTRICT

Coliseum Theatre Photos | History

Alexandria Theatre Photos | Histry

Coronet Theatre Photos | History

Balboa Theatre Photos | History

HAIGHT / INNER SUNSET

Haight Theatre Photos | History

Midtown Theatre Photos | History

Irving Theatre Photos | History

SUNSET / WEST PORTAL

Surf Theatre Photos | History

Parkside Theatre Photos | History

Empire Theatre Photos | History

MISSION / BERNAL HEIGHTS

the City also contributed to the ability of many neighborhood theaters to survive. There was simply no place to develop competing multi-screen theater complexes within the City. As a result, while the city has lost dozens of neighborhood theatres over the last 30 years, it has also managed to hold on to a small, but vital network of neighborhood theaters.

With approximately a dozen theaters still operating, San Francisco is one of only a couple of American cities that retains a critical mass of neighborhood movie theaters. In other cities isolated landmark theaters remain, but the networks of neighborhood theaters have been abandoned - lost treasures of more neighborhood-focussed eras. Most of the theaters that remain continue to thrive as focal points of neighborhood commercial streets and offer a wonderful amenity to San Franciscans who can still walk to the movies.

The following links provide a look at many of San Francisco's neighborhood movie theaters. Theaters are grouped by neighborhood and individual histories of some theatres are also available.

[Roxie Theatre Photos | History](#)

[Victoria Theatre Photos | History](#)

[El Capitan Theatre Photos | History](#)

[Tower Theatre Photos | History](#)

[New Mission](#)

[Theatre Photos | History](#)

[Grand Theatre Photos | History](#)

[Wigwam / Crown / Cine Latino Theatre Photos | History](#)

[Roosevelt / York](#)

[Theatre Photos | History](#)

[Lyceum Theatre Photos | History](#)

NOE VALLEY / CASTRO

[Noe Theatre Photos | History](#)

[Castro Theatre Photos | History](#)

OUTER MISSION / EXCELSIOR / INGLESIDE

[Excelsior Theatre Photos | History](#)

[Amazon / Apollo](#)

[Theatre Photos | History](#)

[El Rey Theatre Photos | History](#)

NOE VALLEY / CASTRO

[Avenue Theatre Photos | History](#)

[Bayview Theatre Photos | History](#)

[Login](#) or [Sign up](#)



[Home](#) [Theaters](#) [Photos](#) [Video](#) [Blog](#) [About](#)

Your guide to movie theaters

Search by Movie Theater, City, or Zipcode

Find tickets and showtimes on Fandango.

[Movie Theaters](#) [United States](#) [California](#) [San Francisco](#) [Outer Richmond](#) [Balboa Theatre](#)

Balboa Theatre

3630 Balboa Street, San Francisco, CA 94121

Open (Showing movies) 2 screens 533 seats

[Overview](#) [Photos](#) [Comments](#)

31 people favorited this theater



Viewing: [Photo](#) | [Street View](#)

The Balboa Theatre is one of the very last neighborhood theatres still operating in the city. It was built by Samuel H. Levin as part of his chain of neighborhood theatres known as San Francisco Theatres Inc. Opened as the New Balboa Theatre on February 27, 1926 with a seating capacity for 800. It was designed by brothers James & Merritt Reid, renowned architects who also designed the Cliff House, Fairmont Hotel, Spreckels Temple of Music in Golden Gate Park and many other theatres in the Bay area. The Balboa Theatre was remodeled after a 1940's fire.

By the 1960's, the Balboa Theatre had very long runs of blockbuster films, at popular prices, including 92 weeks in 1966 and 1967 for "The Sound of Music", which followed the roadshow engagement at the United Artists Theatre on Market Street. After a another fire in in 1978, the theatre was twinned.

The theatre was run by the Levin family for almost 60 years until February 2001. At that time the Balboa Theatre, which was showing second-run films, underwent a renaissance thanks to the efforts by the co-owner of Landmark Theatres chain, Gary Meyer, who



[View larger map](#) →

Related Websites

[Cinema SF \(Official\)](#)

Additional Info

Architects:

James Reid, Merritt Reid

Firms:

Reid Brothers

Functions:

Movies (Classic), Movies (Independent), Movies (Revival), Movies (Second Run)

Styles:

Art Deco, Spanish Colonial

Previous Names:

New Balboa Theatre

Phone Numbers:

Box Office: 415.221.8184

Nearby Theaters

[4-Star Theatre](#)

[Surf Theatre](#)

[Alexandria Theatre](#)

leased it from the Levin family. Meyer showed quality second-run films at very reasonable prices and his efforts built a buzz around town. He renovated the theatre and included revival and film festival screenings. He later switched to first-run films.

Meyer ran the theatre as a labor of love, but after a decade felt it was time for a change. The master lease was turned over to the San Francisco Neighborhood Theatre Foundation in late-2011 under a lease lasting through 2024. In February 2012 Meyer stepped down from being in charge. Both the Balboa Theatre and the Vogue Theatre are now part of the new CinemaSF organization, as the Vogue Theatre had already been rescued by the San Francisco Neighborhood Theatre Foundation.

The Balboa Theatre has 307 seats in auditorium 1 and 226 seats in auditorium 2. Both auditoriums have been equipped with Dolby 5.1 sound systems since 2012.

Contributed by Ross Melnick, Howard B. Haas

[Get Movie Tickets & Showtimes](#)



Irving Theatre



Coliseum Theater

News About This Theater

Mar 2, 2012 — Balboa Theater birthday party not to be missed

Mar 19, 2004 — Balboa's Birthday Bash Was a Blast!

Recent comments (view all 34 comments)



Mikeisirish on June 26, 2012 at 2:54 pm

A 2011 photo can be seen [here](#).



cmbussmann on February 3, 2016 at 9:46 pm

Saw Star Wars: The Force Awakens during my X-Mas sojourn in SF. It's a fantastic neighborhood theatre with a great, congenial staff. Loved the experience!



cmbussmann on February 4, 2016 at 8:11 am

Added two lobby photos from Dec. 2015.



Koistinen on March 8, 2016 at 5:16 am

Exterior and lobby photos from July 2015.



tommysfo on November 15, 2016 at 5:39 pm

I heard there were a couple fires at the theatre. Was anyone ever hurt in those fires??? Does anyone know?



stevenj on November 16, 2016 at 11:54 am

A fire that destroyed most of the interior of the Balboa occurred in 1978. It resulted in the theater being twinned during the renovation. Another online article also mentions a fire in the 1940's but no mention of any injuries in either fire. One would probably need to research the archives of the local newspapers for more details. This June 2016 Hoodline article honoring the Balboa mentions the 1978 fire:

<http://hoodline.com/2016/06/the-story-of-the-outer-richmond-s-historic-balboa-theatre>



moviebuff82 on April 17, 2017 at 2:22 pm

What is the highest grossing movie at this theater?



moviebuff82 on November 14, 2017 at 1:22 pm

If a chain like AMC takes over this theater all hope will be lost.



davidcoppock on March 10, 2018 at 6:25 am

Did it screen the movie "Balboa"?

CinemaSF is born; Gary Meyer officially steps down from the Balboa Theater

Posted on [February 10, 2012](#) by [Sarah B.](#)
Richmond District Blog

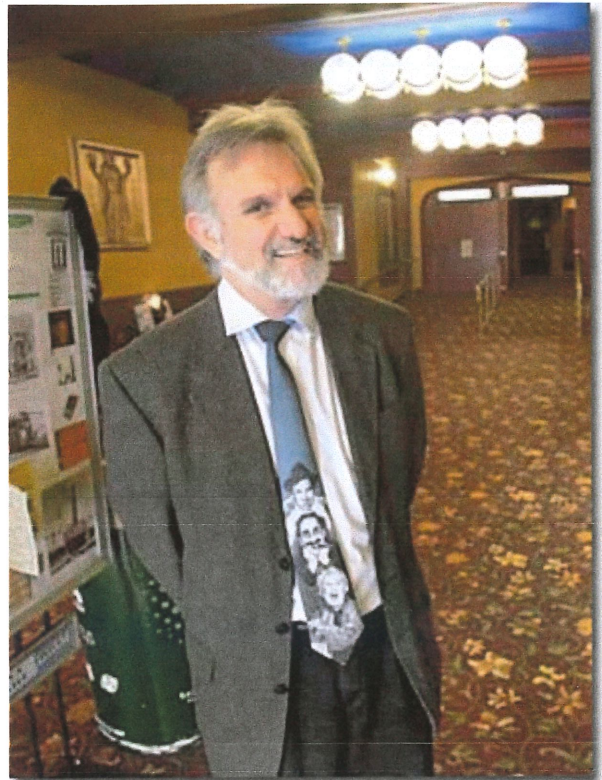
Last night, [CinemaSF](#) – the new name for the two theater chain of the Balboa and Vogue Theaters – sent out a newsletter that included a long [sign-off letter](#) from the Director of the Balboa, Gary Meyer.

Meyer has been running the Balboa Theater since 2001, when he took over management from the Levin family owners. At the time, the Balboa was showing second run movies and barely making ends meet. Meyer knew he needed to take on a different strategy to revive the old movie house, which had been in business since 1926.

“With an enthusiastic staff led by General Manager Roger Paul we made a commitment to showing quality movies, offering excellent customer service, creating an informative website and a weekly newsletter. We set out to build an audience and sense of community. Prices would be among the lowest in town both at the box office and concession stand while upgrading the experience for audiences. We would have filmmaker and author visits, special events, contests and fun.”

Since taking it over, Meyer has built a loyal audience for the theater and made it a thriving part of the Richmond District community. He’s also brought some exciting, innovative programming to the theater ranging from the premieres of historic documentaries, screenings of operas and ballets, special award show screenings for the Golden Globes and Oscars, along with community building events like free HD viewing of the Superbowl just last week.

It was [last July](#) when Meyer first announced that he would be stepping down from his leadership post at the Balboa. At the time, the longevity of the theater was in question. But before he departed, Meyer worked with the [The San Francisco Neighborhood Theater Foundation to arrange for them to take over the Balboa’s lease through 2024](#). The SFNTF will also help fund improvements to the Balboa like a refurbished marquee, a new heating system, and seats. Some of the changes have [already taken place](#).



Gary Meyer in 2005 | Chris Hardy, SFGate.com

In his closing letter, Meyers says his other cinematic commitments have made it tough to manage the Balboa full-time. “The work involved in operating independent cinemas takes a commitment of time, energy and fresh ideas. It has become increasingly difficult for me to do my best contributing these things while doing my full time job as Co-Director of the Telluride Film Festival.”

Filling his ample shoes will be Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker, a husband and wife team who describe themselves as “dyed-in-the-wool movie buffs”. They approached Meyer last year about getting involved with the theater.

“After spending time with them it was clear that they had the passion required,” Meyer write. “Adam has business experience running and marketing a restaurant and producing many music events each year. Jaimi has an accounting background and currently is a production designer for movies and television. And they both have high energy and creative ideas.”

Adam and Jaimi will also manage the Vogue Theater with help from Roger Paul who will stay on as General Manager. The Vogue was taken over by the SFNTF four years ago to save it from closing.

In their first letter to theater supporters, Adam and Jaimi wrote “We will strive to provide you with movies and events you will love in an authentic and charming setting, and we may even have a few tricks up our sleeve as time goes on.” They closed with a quote from the 1971 film Harold and Maude: “*Reach* out. Take a *chance*. Get *hurt* even. But play as well as you can. Go team, go! Give me an L. Give me an I. Give me a V. Give me an E. L-I-V-E. LIVE!”

The two theaters will also employ Jan Klingelhofer to book films. Meyer will also stay on as a consultant to SFCinema, helping them plan the future for both the Balboa and the Vogue Theaters.

Check out the [new CinemaSF website here](#) and when you stop by the Balboa, be sure to welcome Adam and Jaimi to the neighborhood!

Gary Meyer will still be around at times (like at the Balboa’s 86th birthday bash on March 4), saying in his letter, “I look forward to seeing many of you but this time I will be with you in the audience.”

Sarah B.

Balboa Theatre revives nostalgic Saturday matinees

By G. Allen Johnson

Updated 1:46 pm PST, Wednesday, February 8, 2017

It's not 10 cents anymore, but the Balboa Theatre has been determined to revive the old Saturday matinee feeling with its Popcorn Palace series. On a weekly basis, the 90-year-old Richmond District treasure offers up a classic safe for the whole family — and 10 bucks gets you a ticket, popcorn and a drink.

Steven Spielberg, in Phoenix, and George Lucas, in Modesto, likely saw their Saturday matinees in the 1950s at theaters very much like the Balboa. Their Indiana Jones series grew out of the love of those serials and B movies that were low in budget, but rich in imagination. So it seems natural that the Balboa is bringing back the series for the next three Saturdays, beginning with “Raiders of the Lost Ark” at 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 11.

The 1981 original is a nearly perfect movie that changed action films forever, with a rock-solid story and screenplay (by Bay Area filmmaker Philip Kaufman and Lawrence Kasdan, both terrific directors in their own right) and fresh characters — Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford), Marion Ravenwood (Karen Allen) and a host of great character actors from John Rhys-Davies to Denholm Elliott. (Most of you already know this, but you'd be surprised how many Millennials I've encountered who have yet to see an Indiana Jones movie.)

For the underrated “Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom” (Feb. 18), Lucas wanted to go much darker than the original, much as he had with “The Empire Strikes Back,” the second film in his “Star Wars” trilogy. He wanted Indy to suffer through a crisis of conscience, much as Luke Skywalker had in “Empire.” (The dream sequence in “Empire,” where Luke encounters Darth Vader, and finds his own face behind Vader's mask, is paralleled by Indy's drugged-out trance administered by the Kali cult.)

Maligned by many, but there's so much to like: A fantastic Busby Berkeley musical number to Cole Porter's “Anything Goes” to open the film; a wonderful new character in Short Round (Jonathan Ke Quan), Indy's 10-year-old helper who is a tribute to Sam Fuller's Short Round character in the 1951 Korean War film “The Steel Helmet”; and a fantastic mine car chase done with mostly miniatures capped by a thrilling climax on a rope suspension bridge. It contains some of Spielberg's best action work.

The conventional wisdom holds that “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade” (Feb. 25), which imagined Sean Connery as Indy's father, as the far better film than “Temple of Doom.” Not true. “Last Crusade” — also a wonderful film — is a little too light; it's almost a comedy first, action film second. But Connery's magnetism gives it much-needed heft.

To think that Lucas, Spielberg and Ford are supposedly getting together to make another Indiana Jones movie scheduled for a 2019 release, when Ford would be 77, just goes to show, you never get too old for Saturday matinees.

At the Balboa Theatre, 3630 Balboa St., S.F. (415) 221-8184. www.cinemasf.com/balboa



The Story Of The Outer Richmond's Historic Balboa Theatre



Photos: Nikki Collister/Hoodline

Wed. June 1, 2016
by Nikki Collister

There was a time, not too long ago, when the neon glow of a marquee designated the beating heart of a neighborhood: a place for locals to gather, mingle, and enjoy the latest Hollywood production. And in the Outer Richmond, at least, that still holds true.

The Art Deco-inspired lobby of the [Balboa Theatre](#) (3630 Balboa St.) is a glimpse back in time, filled with historic movie posters and eye-catching curiosities from yesteryear. The week's movies are inscribed in chalk behind a long counter that serves as both the box office and concession stand. Concessions include the usual popcorn, hot dogs, and soda, as well as some unique treats—where else can you get It's-Its and Capri Sun at a movie theater?

As one of the city's oldest operating movie theaters, the Balboa has provided entertainment to generations of San Franciscans over the years, screening everything from silent films to summer blockbusters to cult classics. Its location at 38th Avenue means it's not always the most convenient place to catch a flick, unless you live in the area. But for many city dwellers, the 90-year-old theater is a local favorite, and a lasting remnant of the days when neighborhood theaters were king.



The Balboa's history begins in 1926, when theater operator Samuel H. Levin hired renowned architects James and Merritt Reid to design what was originally called the "New Balboa," in order to distinguish it from a theater with the same name in the Sunset.

It was an era when new movie houses seemed to be popping up every month. "Most of these theaters were operated by the same few families, like the Levins," explains Alfonso Felder, president of the [San Francisco Neighborhood Theater Foundation](#) (SFNTF). "Not everyone knows that, but the ties between some of our theaters go back almost a century."

The New Balboa's design was modest compared to most of the other local theaters the Reid Brothers had built: its exterior, reminiscent of a Spanish mission, was simple and unadorned, blending into its suburban surroundings.



The Balboa in 1972. (Photo: Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, SF Public Library)

In its early days, the Balboa was a destination for eager moviegoers to see the latest silent films, with a single auditorium that sat up to 800 people. Along with nearby Richmond venues the Alexandria and the Coliseum, the New Balboa found success by providing the city's westside residents with an ever-changing rotation of popular films.

Over the years, the theater saw the transition of film from silent to sound, from black and white to vibrant Technicolor. It also adopted its present name, after the original Balboa became the Westwood. As the movie industry evolved, the small Richmond establishment adjusted its offerings, but kept its core business model the same.

"The Balboa has always been a neighborhood theater in the truest form," says Felder. "These types of theaters would show popular films after they debuted on Market Street, bringing those movies to the people in the neighborhoods."

After a fire damaged much of its original interior in 1978, the Balboa turned its one large auditorium into two smaller screening rooms, and has kept the same layout since then.



Over the next few decades, the Balboa would survive the boom of multiplex theaters that threatened and ultimately claimed many of its contemporaries, including the neighboring Alexandria and Coliseum. It stayed in business thanks to a succession of devoted owners, starting with local film enthusiast Gary Meyer.

Under Meyer's watch, the theater underwent a series of much-needed renovations. It also began hosting events and themed programming, which brought in a new wave of interest.

In 2011, Meyer passed the reins to Adam Bergeron and his wife, Jaimi Holker, who continue to own and operate the Balboa as part of CinemaSF.

"With a small theater like this, it's really a labor of love, something you do because you enjoy it," Bergeron explains, noting that neighborhood theaters are not the most lucrative businesses to operate.



Prior to taking over the Balboa, Bergeron had run businesses in the music and restaurant industries. But the management of a movie theater came with a whole new set of challenges, from getting clearance to screen the latest films to figuring out how to fix the theater's historic neon marquee. "When things like that break, they break in a very expensive way," he told us.

In 2013, the Balboa faced its biggest hurdle yet, when it was given a deadline by distribution companies to convert its projectors from film to digital. "After January 1, 2014, they would stop making 35mm films, and everything would need to be converted to digital," Bergeron says. "Without meeting the distribution companies' requirements, you couldn't show new movies."

The costly upgrade compounded the existing financial strains of small theaters across the city, leaving many of them with no choice but to close their doors after decades of operation. If it couldn't make the leap, the Balboa faced a similar fate.

So, together with Felder and the SFNTF, Bergeron launched a Kickstarter campaign to raise money for the digital conversion. He'd hoped to gather enough to replace at least one projector, but the result far exceeded his expectations: a total of 1,063 supporters raised over \$100,000, with backers coming from as far as Germany.

"People came out in droves," he says. "The neighborhood, community, friends ... It was mind-blowing, how many people cared enough to contribute."



The Balboa is now fully equipped with digital projection and surround sound. It shows a combination of first-run feature films and themed screenings, along with family-friendly movies every Saturday morning and classic films on Thursday evenings.

Bergeron and Felder have an ongoing list of plans for the Balboa, including special events and continued renovations. Over the course of the summer, they're partnering with San Franpsycho and Anchor Brewing to show several 1970s-set movies, paired with themed beers. (The first film in the series, *Almost Famous*, [screens tonight](#).) In the fall, Bergeron plans to curate a series of unique films, accompanied by live music from local bands.

"Our main goal is to continue to have this great resource for the people in the Richmond," says Felder. "We were able to make those necessary improvements with the help of the community, so now, we want to ensure the theater can serve the neighborhood for many years to come."

<https://hoodline.com/2018/07/outer-richmond-merchants-present-2nd-annual-music-festival>



Outer Richmond music festival returns for 2nd year [Updated]



Members of The Axidents, Positive Citizen and Marigold 916 in front of Noise. | Photo: Noise/[Instagram](#)

Wed. July 25, 2018, 4:39pm
by Nicole Newman

On Saturday, August 4, the [Playland-on-Balboa music festival](#) returns to the Outer Richmond for its second year.

The free event brings local makers, food vendors, musicians and family-friendly fun to Balboa Street between 35th and 38th avenues, which will be closed to street traffic from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Nonprofit organization Richmond District Neighborhood Center is the event's organizing body. According to a statement, this iteration of the music festival was funded by the city's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, Outside Lands Works and the Balboa Village Merchants Association.

In addition to a main outdoor stage, several Outer Richmond businesses are participating, including La Promenade Cafe, Simple Pleasures cafe, the Balboa Theater, and [Noise](#), a record shop and art gallery founded by area resident and professional musician Daniel Brown at 3427 Balboa St.



Sara Johnson. | **Photo: Nicole Newman/Hoodline**

“My son opened his record store in 2015 where he also had live music open to the public, every hour from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.,” said Brown's mother, Sara Johnson. “He wanted to do and create something that he thought the neighborhood would like.”

According to [The Chronicle](#), Brown, a saxophonist, began selling records on Balboa Street at The Mysterious Rack, a since-shuttered consignment store. When an art studio a few doors down went under, Brown leased the location and opened in September 2015.

Acts performing at the festival's outdoor main stage include DJ Jackie Sugarlumps, The Total Betty's, BURNT, Lilan Kane, and Bandy's Brass Band.



Photo: [Lisa W./Yelp](#)

During the festival, La Promenade Café will host music by Denise & Larry and McLean, and Creative IQ will present an art opening titled, "Those Who Can, Teach," along with a performance by Bandy's Brass Band.

After a free 10 a.m. screening of cartoons for children, the Balboa Theater will exhibit two films by Strehon Taylor, "Sutro's: The Palace at Land's End," and "Playland at the Beach," a look at the former amusement park that was once the area's main attraction.

Johnson, a San Francisco native (and pianist) who frequented Playland as a child, noted that the theater is home to a restored bumper car that was once in service at the amusement park.

After the festival ends, Simple Pleasures (3434 Balboa St.) will host live music from 4–9 p.m., including performances by The Wyatt Act, Vollmer, The Salt People, and Chris Mendoza and Friends, while VERST and Rocky Ramirez will perform sets at Noise.

Certificate of Honor

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
City and County of San Francisco

The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco hereby issues, and authorizes the execution of, this Certificate of Honor in appreciative public recognition of distinction and merit for outstanding service to a significant portion of the people of the City and County of San Francisco by:

Balboa Theatre
90th Anniversary

For your commitment to entertaining San Franciscans since 1926, and serving as a long-time community institution in the Outer Richmond and one of the last thriving independent movie theatres in San Francisco, the Board of Supervisors extends its highest commendation and appreciation.

ERIC MAR

Supervisor Eric Mar, District 1
March 6th, 2016

Mark S. Jan
Scott Wiener
John S. Lee
David Campos
Clara Reyes
Michelle Wu
John S. Lee
John S. Lee



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Legacy Business Registry Case Report

HEARING DATE: OCTOBER 17, 2018

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

****The following report provides recommendations for three (3) Legacy Business applications.****

Filing Date: September 19, 2018
Case No.: 2018-013136LBR
Business Name: Balboa Theatre
Business Address: 3630 Balboa Street
Zoning: NC-2 (Neighborhood Commercial, Small Scale)
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 1580/003A
Applicant: Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker
3630 Balboa Street
San Francisco, CA 94121
Nominated By: Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer, District 1
Staff Contact: Shelley Caltagirone - (415) 558-6625
shelley.caltagirone@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The Balboa Theatre (“the Balboa”) opened on February 27, 1926. The original owner, Samuel H. Levin, hired renowned architects James and Merritt Reid to design and build a neighborhood theater to service the Outer Richmond district. It was originally called the “New Balboa” in order to distinguish it from a theater with the same name in the Sunset district. The theater was more modest than some of the theaters designed by the Reid Brothers and made to blend in with the more suburban surroundings of the neighborhood. It had one large auditorium which sat approximately 800 people.

The Balboa was owned by the Levin family until the 1970s. In 1978, it was converted into a two-screen theater. Gary Meyer bought the business in 2004 and sold it to current owners Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker on January 1, 2012. Under the guidance of Gary Meyer, and then Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker, the theater has become a focal point for the neighborhood, both physically and culturally. The creative and inclusive programming provides entertainment for diverse audiences and promotes a lively atmosphere for neighborhood patrons and visiting guests. Today, the Balboa Theatre shows a combination of first-run feature films and themed screenings, along with family-friendly movies every Saturday morning and classic films on Thursday evenings.

The business is located on the north side of Balboa Street between 37th and 38th avenues in the Outer Richmond neighborhood. It is within a NC-2 (Neighborhood Commercial, Small Scale) Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1926.

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

Yes. Balboa Theatre qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. Balboa Theatre has operated continuously in San Francisco for 92 years.
- ii. Balboa Theatre has contributed to the history and identity of San Francisco by serving as a neighborhood theater.
- iii. Balboa Theatre is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

Yes. The business is associated with the neighborhood theater tradition. It was originally designed as a combination theater that could exhibit both motion pictures and vaudeville shows.

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

Persons

Yes. Balboa Theatre is associated with prominent San Francisco movie theater developer Samuel Levin.

Architecture

Yes. Balboa Theatre is a work of master architects the Reid Brothers and it represents the early 20th century neighborhood combination movie theater building type. The Balboa Theatre's design was modest compared to most of the other local theaters the Reid Brothers had built. The exterior of the building is reminiscent of a Spanish mission. The lobby is inspired by Art Deco. Many of the interior features are reminiscent of the "Alhambra" style of architecture, including some nice ornate cut outs in the walls where posters can hang. Subsequent decorations inside the theater lobby have honored the Alhambra style by using the mosque-style corners on the cut outs in other areas of the theater.

Events

Yes. Balboa Theatre is associated with neighborhood theater development in San Francisco. Located in commercial corridors, the city's theaters are associated with the expansion of the film industry after the turn of the 20th century and reflect the cultural and economic development of San Francisco. The Balboa Theater is one of twenty-three contributing theaters to a potentially eligible non-contiguous multiple property historic district. The period of significance for the district spans 1906-1945.

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

No. The property has a Planning Department Historic Resource status of "B" (Properties Requiring Further Consultation and Review) as the building was constructed in 1925 and has not been formally evaluated.

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

Yes. The Balboa Theatre is listed in the Draft San Francisco Neighborhood Movie Theater Non-Contiguous Multiple Property Historic District Context Statement, prepared in 2006 by Andrew Murray and Katie Tom for the Board of Supervisors. The report provides background information about the neighborhood theater typology in San Francisco but provides little specific information about Balboa Theatre.

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

Yes. The Balboa Theater has been featured a number of times in the San Francisco Chronicle, as well as the Richmond District Blog, Hoodline Magazine, Via Magazine, Sunset Magazine and Cinema Treasures.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 3630 Balboa Street

Recommended by Applicant

- Marquee

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Primary façade with shaped parapet, window openings, central and recessed entrance, and flanking storefront openings
- Blade sign
- Interior spaces, including the ticketing area, lobby, and original auditorium volume
- Original interior ornamental features
- Film programming



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution No.

HEARING DATE: OCTOBER 17, 2018

Case No.: 2018-013136LBR
Business Name: Balboa Theatre
Business Address: 3630 Balboa Street
Zoning: NC-2 (Neighborhood Commercial, Small Scale)
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 1580/003A
Applicant: Adam Bergeron and Jaimi Holker
3630 Balboa Street
San Francisco, CA 94121
Nominated By: Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer, District 1
Staff Contact: Shelley Caltagirone - (415) 558-6625
shelley.caltagirone@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye - (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR BALBOA THEATRE CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 3630 BALBOA STREET, (BLOCK/LOT 1580/003A).

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 October 17, 2018, 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 Balboa Theatre 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 Balboa Theatre.

Location(s):

- 3630 Balboa Street

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Marquee
- Primary façade with shaped parapet, window openings, central and recessed entrance, and flanking storefront openings
- Blade sign
- Interior spaces, including the ticketing area, lobby, and original auditorium volume
- Original interior ornamental features
- Film programming

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 2018-013136LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on October 17, 2018.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: