



Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application Number: LBR-2025-26-022
Business Name: The Book Club of California
Business Address: 47 Kearny St., Suite 400
District: District 3
Applicant: Kevin Kosik, Executive Director
Nomination Date: December 10, 2025
Nominated By: Supervisor Danny Sauter

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

153 Kearny St. from 1912 to 1913 (1 year)
760 Market St., 3rd Floor from 1913 to 1915 (2 years)
68 Post St. from 1916 to 1919 (3 years)
310 Sansome St. in 1919 (1 year)
110 Sutter St. from 1920 to 1939 (19 years)
235 Montgomery St. from 1939 to 1946 (7 years)
549 Market St. from 1946 to 1955 (9 years)
545 Sutter St. from 1955 to 1978 (23 years)
312 Sutter St., Suite 510 from 1978 to 2010 (32 years)
312 Sutter St., Suite 500 from 2010 to 2023 (13 years)
47 Kearny St., Suite 400 from 2023 to Present (2 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

FEATURES OR TRADITIONS: Promotion of books

NOTES: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: December 10, 2025

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program
Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org



Member, Board of Supervisors
District 3



City and County of San Francisco

DANNY SAUTER

December 10, 2025

Director Katy Tang
San Francisco Office of Small Business
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Director Tang,

I am honored to nominate The Book Club of California for inclusion in the Legacy Business Registry. For more than a century, The Book Club has been an important part of our city's thriving arts and bibliophilic communities by providing a space for all San Franciscans to share and explore their love for books.

The Book Club of California has operated continuously in San Francisco since its founding in 1912. It was born out of an effort to create an exhibition of fine press for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition that was held in San Francisco in 1915. Since then, it has engaged thousands of individuals with programs, events, publications, and its special collections library to help preserve and promote the book arts community. It has counted legends among its members including Ansel Adams, John Steinbeck, and Mark Twain – but beyond that, it has brought thousands of bibliophiles to San Francisco to learn more about the rich history of book arts.

The Book Club has contributed positively to San Francisco and its arts community for over a century, and for that reason I strongly believe that The Book Club of California is worthy of being designated a Legacy Business. Thank you for your consideration of this nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. J. Sauter".

Supervisor Danny Sauter



Legacy Business Registry Application



Business Information

Business name: The Book Club of California

Business owner name(s): Non-profit organization

Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business

Current business address: 47 Kearny Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94108

Business phone number: 415-781-7532

Business email: info@bccbooks.org

Mailing address (if different than above):

Website: www.bccbooks.org

Link to social media: www.facebook.com/TheBookClubofCalifornia

Link to social media #2: www.youtube.com/c/TheBookClubofCA

7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN): 1070754

Contact Person Information

Contact person name: Kevin Kosik

Contact person title: Executive Director

Contact phone number: 415-781-7532

Contact email:

Locations that the Book Club of California has called home since 1912

Year(s)	Duration	Street Address	Building Information	Zip Code
1912-1913	1 year	153 Kearny Street	Commonwealth Club	94108
1913-1915	2 years	760 Market Street	Phelan Building, 3rd Floor	94102
1916-1919	3 years	68 Post Street		94104
1919	1 year	310 Sansome Street	The Alaska Commerical Bldg	94104
1920-1939	19 years	110 Sutter Street		94104
1939-1946	7 years	235 Montgomery Street	Russ Building	94104
1946-1955	9 years	549 Market Street		94104
1955-1978	23 years	545 Sutter Street		94102
1978-2010	32 years	312 Sutter Street	World Affairs Council Bldg, Suite 510	94108
2010-2023	13 years	312 Sutter Street	World Affairs Council Bldg, Suite 500	94108
2023-present		47 Kearny Street, Ste 400		94108

Applicant Disclosures

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. 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:



Signature:

Date:

The Book Club of California

Written Historical Narrative

Introduction

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

The Book Club of California is a non-profit 501(c)(3) member- and donor-supported organization founded in December 1912. The Club's mission is to preserve and promote the history of the book and the book arts. It supports book making, fine printing, design, typography, illustration, literature, and scholarship through a series of fine press publications, free public programs, lectures, and exhibitions, and a special collections library, all with an emphasis on the history and literature of California and the West.

b. Describe whom the business serves.

With over 750 members and thousands of supporters, the Book Club engages and educates more than 4,000 individuals—bibliophiles of all stripes—each year. Located in San Francisco for more than a century, the Book Club serves residents and visitors to the city with in-person programs and serves book lovers around the world with virtual programs and publications. Their programs, events, exhibitions, and library are free and open to all.

A 2021 Member Survey found that 90% of their members are older (50+ years old), and the gender split is 56% male and 41% female. Half (53%) work in a book-related profession and half (53%) identify as a book collector. Fully 87% describe themselves as a “lifelong learner.”

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

A haven for book lovers and bibliophiles in the Bay Area and beyond.

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.

The Book Club of California was founded at 153 Kearny Street in the Commonwealth Club building. The location was the business/operating location for the Book Club.

The Book Club was founded following the effort to present an exhibition of fine press at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. Information about the founding of the organization is available on the [“About” webpage](#) [The Book Club’s website](#):

"One morning in 1912, Dr. Edward Robeson Taylor, poet, physician and once mayor of San Francisco, joined W. R. K. Young, book collector and businessman; John Henry Nash, already widely known as a printer; and James D. Blake, then of Newbegin's Book Shop and later to represent Harper Brothers, publishers, on the West Coast. Together they called on Charles C. Moore, president of the forthcoming Panama-Pacific International Exposition, to suggest that a collection of rare books and locally produced fine printing be displayed.

"Moore, himself an ardent bibliophile, approved the idea but advised that it would carry more weight with the exhibits committee if it came, not from a few individuals, but from an organized group. The petitioners thanked him and left, to return an hour or two later and repeat their request—this time on behalf of the Book Club of California, an organization they had dreamed up over the luncheon table.

"The book exhibition they envisioned never came to pass, but the club they had so casually created fared very well indeed. By December of 1912, it was formally organized and could boast of fifty-eight charter members.

"To be sure, bibliophiles existed in San Francisco prior to the birth of the Book Club of California, and there was fine book-making, as well. And, as Oscar Lewis noted, there had been an idea to exhibit local and international fine bookmaking at the upcoming 1915 World's Fair, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition.

"Why the proposed book exhibit never took place remains a mystery since the PPIE contained a variety of art exhibitions, including paintings, prints, and sculpture. Indeed, one of co-founder Florence Lundborg's murals won a bronze medal at the fair. But not presenting an exhibit at the fair certainly didn't stop the Book Club of California. Spurred on, perhaps, by the Club's stated purpose—'the study of letters and the promotion of the arts pertaining to the production of books'—within a year the fledgling Club had sponsored a variety of events, including lectures, entertainments, and two special exhibitions: one of rare bookplates and another displaying fine book bindings.

"In 1914, the Club published its first book: Robert Ernest Cowan's monumental *Bibliography of the History of California and the Pacific West*, thereby beginning a tradition that has lasted over one hundred years."

Locations that the Book Club of California has called home since 1912				
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2023-present		47 Kearny Street, Ste 400		94018

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

The Book Club of California is a nonprofit organization. As a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, no individual has an ownership stake in the organization. A board of 13-21 directors oversees the operations of the Book Club. Copies of their by-laws, articles of incorporation, and annual IRS Form 990 tax filings are available upon request.

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

The Book Club has operated continuously since 1912, including during financial crises, world wars, and the COVID pandemic when much of their mission-based work was presented/delivered virtually.

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.

The Book Club of California is a leader in the local and national bibliophilic communities. A member of the San Francisco Bay Area's thriving book arts community and a member of the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies, the Book Club convenes artists and arts/cultural organizations, attends/presents at local and statewide book fairs, and provides a welcoming, supportive environment in their club rooms and library for book-related scholarship and convivial social interaction.

The Book Club has a century-long tradition of preserving and promoting the history of the book and the book arts AND inspiring curiosity, sparking creativity, and creating conversation. The organization continues today with carefully conceived, thoughtfully designed, and attractively printed fine press books in limited editions, a dynamic series of free public lectures, and expertly curated exhibitions. The richness of the Albert Sperisen Library further preserves and promotes the art of fine printing with its holdings of reference, fine press, and rare materials.

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

The Book Club has its roots in the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, where it came together with the goal of producing an exhibit on California fine print, rare books, and ephemera. Dr. Edward Robeson Taylor, poet, physician and once mayor of San Francisco, joined W. R. K. Young, book collector and businessman; John Henry Nash, already widely known as a printer; and James D. Blake, then of Newbegin's Book Shop and later to represent Harper Brothers, publishers, on the West Coast to found the Book Club.

Book Club members include printers, binders, typographers, historians, librarians, curators, collectors, readers, scholars, and people who simply love books. A virtual "Who's Who" of those who have made important contributions to arts and letters, their members and their collaborators have included, among others, Ansel Adams, Ambrose Bierce, Robert Bringhurst, Witter Bynner, Philip P. Choy, Isadora Duncan, William Everson, Francis P. Farquhar, Edwin & Robert Grabhorn, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, Robinson Jeffers, Alfred A. Knopf, Ward Ritchie, Rebecca Solnit, Kevin Starr, Jack Stauffacher, Robert Louis Stevenson, John Steinbeck, and Mark Twain. (But you don't have to be famous to be a Book Club of California member. You just need to have a passion for fine books—and the people who make and collect them.)

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

The Book Club is a charitable organization and provides programs (lectures, exhibitions, etc.) at no cost to the general public. They provide meeting and performance space to the nonprofit community for free or at minimal cost. Membership is open to all and reasonably priced. Their student membership initiative provides no-cost membership to those interested in the book as a cultural object and the book arts. Currently over 100 students participate as Book Club members for free. Book Club members and staff serve as volunteer leaders (board members, committee members, day-of-service volunteers) for many local nonprofit organizations, schools, libraries, etc. For example, the Book Club's executive director is currently the board president for Theatre Bay Area.

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

In 1933, the Book Club of California inaugurated its *Quarterly News-Letter* and *Annual Printed Keepsake*, both of which continue uninterrupted to this day. These publications include Book Club news and book-related articles and essays and are featured in libraries around the country, and around the world. They have also published their own history in *The Book Club of*

California at One Hundred by Gary F. Kurutz, the now-retired Director of Special Collections at the California State Library in Sacramento.

The organization has operated since 1912 and, as a leader in the book community, the Book Club of California is mentioned many times in books, magazines, and local and national newspapers.

Selected articles about the Book Club include:

- [Secretly Awesome: The Book Club Of California, A Boon To Bibliophiles](#)
Hoodline
May 12, 2016
- [San Francisco's best-kept secret: The Book Club of California](#)
The Mercury News
March 7, 2016
- [Book Club of California](#)
Atlas Obscura
August 5, 2015

e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?

In 1996, the American Printing History Association (APHA) presented the Book Club of California its institutional award for contributions to the understanding of printing history. In 2001, the Book Club of California received the silver medal for Notable Contribution to Publishing from the Commonwealth Club of California for *Splendide Californie! Impressions of The Golden State By French Artists, 1786–1900*. In 2008, the Printing Industries Association of Southern California (PIASC) recognized the Book Club of California for its keepsakes on California Travel Posters. And it received the Book Builders West 2011 award for best catalog for the 2010 Keepsake, *Jo Mora: California Cowboy & Artist* by Peter Hiller.

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

The Book Club is an integral part of the fabric of San Francisco's art and culture sector. They lead, convene, and connect book lovers to book artists and collectors to book sellers. Without them, the bibliophilic community would be weakened. With over a century of service and a history of accomplishment, the Book Club's loss would leave San Francisco without a cultural champion and community treasure. Lastly, the Book Club is also one of the few remaining fine press and fine book publishers of California history left in the country.

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?

The Book Club has always rented office and program space in San Francisco. After 40 years at the World Affairs Council Center on Sutter Street, they are currently located at 47 Kearny Street in the Oscar Luning Building designed by Nathaniel Blaisdell and built in 1907. The Book Club makes its “home” wherever their members and fellow bibliophiles gather. Their club rooms include a well-equipped lecture hall, handsomely appointed special collections research library, and comfortable seating for the leisurely enjoyment of books and printed matter, as well as for convivial conversation on all things bookish.

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

A safe, welcoming, and intellectually stimulating environment for book lovers of all stripes.

c. What is the plan to keep the business open in the long term beyond the current ownership?

The Book Club is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a healthy quasi-endowment and a dedicated and growing membership base. The caring and committed board of directors has expertly steered the organization through financial challenges, wars, and cultural shifts for more than 100 years and expects the Book Club to remain vital and vibrant for the next 100 years.

d. What challenges is the business facing today?

Believing that the future of the book and the book arts in the Bay Area is dependent on growing the community of those that value the book as a cultural object and as a way to document the history of California and the West, the Book Club continues to create programs and publications to appeal to the next generation of book lovers. Like many legacy arts and cultural organizations (the SF Opera, SF Ballet, SF Symphony, etc.), attracting and engaging the next generation of supporters (book lovers) is the biggest challenge faced by the organization.

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.

Promotion of books and book arts.

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 Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building at 45-47 Kearny Street (the Oscar Luning Building) is “A - Historic Resource Present.” The building was constructed in 1907 and includes Renaissance and Baroque ornamentation. Per the Property Information Map, “the entire facade of this tripartite vertical box is heavily rusticated. A series of recessed windows creates different fenestration rhythms on Kearny and Maiden Lane. The massing is a high quality example of an undifferentiated shaft set between more elaborately treated base and capital elements. Although the original large glazed areas on the base on Kearny Street have been severely altered, upper level windows are contained within round-headed arches with console keystones. The building is capped by a projecting cornice. The building relates well to neighboring structures. Its contextual value lies in a similar use of massing, color, facade articulation, detailing and materials. The sharp verticality of the structure is somewhat unique for the street.”



Fire Escape





Fire Escape

EXIT



















SAN FRANCISCO

SELECT A TAG

Bay Area / San Francisco

SECRETLY AWESOME: THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA, A BOON TO BIBLIOPHILES

By Geri Koeppel

Published on May 12, 2016



The [Book Club of California](#) has little in common with what most people consider when they think of a book club, except that the people involved **all** love books—and yes, sometimes there's wine.

The nonprofit is a combination publisher, library, museum and cultural center, all based out of a space on the fifth floor of 312 Sutter St. It's "dedicated to the history of the book and the book arts, with a particular focus on California and the West," said executive director Jennifer Sime. "Our mission also has been partly to support the continuing crafts of fine printing and bookmaking," with programs, exhibitions and publications covering everything from literature and illustration to typography and design.



Jennifer Sime. (Photo: Geri Koeppel/Hoodline)

The space has that "real book smell" of paper and ink, and it's a lovely spot for lounging, given the parlor-like feel in the main rooms. Though it sells annual memberships for \$95 (\$25 for students), it's open to all. Many members are librarians, booksellers, historians and those in the book arts, but others are simply dedicated bibliophiles. Kevin Starr, author of *Americans and the California Dream*, is a member, and a winner of the club's prestigious Oscar Lewis Award.



Photo:© Matthew Millman

While the club is supported by memberships, you don't have to join to enjoy it. "We exist so people use the

resources," Sime said. "It's important for us to find ways to make it available and accessible."

With that said, the organization only has two full-time and two part-time staffers, alongside some dedicated volunteers. If you're seeking something specific, you might want to search on [WorldCat](#) before you go.



Photo: © Matthew Millman

The Book Club of California also hosts talks throughout the year by authors, book binders, paper makers, illustrators, designers and more. They're usually held on Monday nights, and are open to the public.

Upcoming guests include Gary Kamiya (author of *Cool Gray City of Love*), who'll discuss "The Hidden Waters of San Francisco," and Simon Green, a sixth-generation paper maker and former owner of the historic Hayle Mill in England, on "A Personal View of Paper History." If you can't make a talk, you can catch them later via the club's [video archive](#).

Coming up on May 23rd is a publication party for *Palatino: The Natural History of a Typeface* by Robert Bringhurst, which is expected to bring a passionate crowd. The book is billed as "a definitive account" of the recently deceased typeface designer [Hermann](#)

Zapf's "most ambitious and enduring design project,"

which Sime told us spanned 60 years.

"He worked on it from early foundry type to monotype and linotype through digital design," she said. "His involvement in that whole evolution gives a cultural history of the evolution of type design. The design community's really interested, and we're getting orders from all around the world."



Palatino: The Natural History of a Typeface by Robert Bringhurst. (Photo: Lesya Westerman/© The Book Club of California)

Sime added that supplements will be included, to show how the typeface looks when printed from various technologies, and how that shapes the letter form. "In addition to having this beautiful narrative of the typeface, it's literally a taxonomy of the different designs," she noted. More details about the book and how to order it are [online](#).



The club also hosts three exhibitions each year, as well as a pop-up exhibit on holiday cards. The current

exhibit is *Fine Print: The Review for the Arts of the Book (1975-1990)*, which focuses on the San Francisco-based journal of the same name.

The goal of *Fine Print* "was to unite all of the book arts into one publication: Book binders could read about printing, and printers could read about illustration, and everyone could read about the history of the book," Sime said.



Photo: Geri Koeppel/Hoodline

The Book Club of California was founded in 1912 by four men, with the goal of highlighting fine local publishers and book collections in preparation for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. "A lot of people don't realize what a rich publishing history the Bay Area has," Sime said.

While the exhibit didn't come to pass, the club soon boasted 58 charter members, and is now up to more than 800. Unlike many clubs of its era, the Book Club of California welcomed women, counting legendary philanthropist **Phoebe Apperson Hearst** (the mother of William Randolph Hearst) and San Francisco book binder Florence Walter as members. In 2012, Walter's family gave the club her collection of book bindings.



Photo: Geri Koeppel/Hoodline

Although the Book Club of California's library isn't extensive, it does boast one of the largest collections of books and ephemera by Indiana natives Robert and Edwin Grabhorn, two of the most influential printers in San Francisco in the 20th century. Walter did a lot of binding for the Grabhorns, so her family's bequest added quite a bit to the club's collection, Sime said. "Books are these phenomenal collaborations of master craftspeople."

We asked Sime why people are still interested in making and reading physical books, given the rise of online publishing. She said she believes it's a response to how much time we already spend in the digital world. And, she noted, people still appreciate the difference between reading on a tablet and reading a book, particularly a well-made one. "There's a lot of literature out there that deserves its best form," she said.

[San Francisco / Financial District – Arts & Culture](#) ▾



Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____
January 26, 2026

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

Application Number: LBR-2025-26-022
Business Name: The Book Club of California
Business Address: 47 Kearny St., Suite 400
District: District 3
Applicant: Kevin Kosik, Executive Director
Nomination Date: December 10, 2025
Nominated By: Supervisor Danny Sauter
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for The Book Club of California, currently located at 47 Kearny St., Suite 400.

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 January 26, 2026, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

Legacy Business Program
Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org



BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes The Book Club of California 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 The Book Club of California.



Physical features or traditions that define the business:
• Promotion of books and book art.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain The Book Club of California on the Legacy Business Registry:
• Promotion of books.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on January 26, 2026.

Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

Legacy Business Program
Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
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LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: January 7, 2026

Filing Date: December 10, 2025
Case No.: 2025-012176LBR
Business Name: The Book Club of California
Business Address: 47 Kearny Street
Zoning: C-3-O (Downtown-Office) Zoning District
80-130-F Height and Bulk District
Cultural District: Not Applicable
Block/Lot: 0310/003
Applicant: Kevin Kosik
47 Kearny Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Danny Sauter
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Heather Samuels - 628-652-7545
Heather.Samuels@sfgov.org

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

The Book Club of California is a non-profit 501(c)(3) member- and donor-supported organization founded in December 1912. The Club's mission is to preserve and promote the history of books and the book arts. It supports book making, fine printing, design, typography, illustration, literature, and scholarship through a series of fine press publications, free public programs, lectures, and exhibitions, and a special collections library, all with an emphasis on the history and literature of California and the West.

The Book Club of California was founded at 153 Kearny Street in the Commonwealth Club building. The location was the business/operating location for the Book Club. The Book Club was founded following the effort to present an exhibition of fine press at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. The Book Club has operated continuously since 1912, including during financial crises, world wars, and the COVID pandemic when much of their mission-based work was presented/delivered virtually.

With over 750 members and thousands of supporters, the Book Club engages and educates more than 4,000 individuals—bibliophiles of all stripes—each year. Located in San Francisco for more than a century, the Book Club serves residents and visitors to the city with in-person programs and serves book lovers around the world with virtual programs and publications. Their programs, events, exhibitions, and library are free and open to all.

A 2021 Member Survey found that 90% of their members are older (50+ years old), and the gender split is 56% male and 41% female. Half (53%) work in a book-related profession and half (53%) identify as a book collector. Fully 87% describe themselves as a “lifelong learner.”

The Book Club of California is a leader in the local and national bibliophilic communities. A member of the San Francisco Bay Area’s thriving book arts community and a member of the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies, the Book Club convenes artists and arts/cultural organizations, attends/presents at local and statewide book fairs, and provides a welcoming, supportive environment in their club rooms and library for book-related scholarship and convivial social interaction.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. When was business founded?

The business was founded in 1912.

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

Yes. The Book Club of California qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. The Book Club of California has operated continuously in San Francisco for 113 years.
- b. The Book Club of California has contributed to the history and identity of the Financial District neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. The Book Club of California 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 book making, fine printing, design, typography, illustration, literature, and fine press making.

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

Yes. The Book Club has always rented office and program space in San Francisco and was created by notable persons including Dr. Edward Robeson Taylor, poet, physician, and former Mayor of San Francisco; John Henry Nash, notable fine printer; James D. Blake, book publisher; and Charles C. Moore, President of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition.

Currently they are located at 47 Kearny Street in the Oscar Luning Building designed by Nathaniel Blaisdell and built in 1907. The Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building at 45-47 Kearny Street (the Oscar Luning Building) is “A - Historic Resource Present.” The building’s design includes Renaissance and Baroque ornamentation. Though, the Book Club makes its “home” wherever their members and fellow bibliophiles gather. Their club rooms include a well-equipped lecture hall, handsomely appointed special collections research library, and comfortable seating for the leisurely enjoyment of books and printed matter, as well as for convivial conversation on all things bookish.

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

Yes, the site is listed as a Category IV – Contributory Building to the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Article 11 Conservation District.

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

This property is associated with Nathaniel Blaisdell, who was the architect of the Oscar Luning Building at 47 Kearny Street where The Book Club of California currently occupies. Nathaniel Blaisdell is mentioned in the Architecture, Planning, and Preservation Professionals: A Collection of Biographies Historic Context Statement.

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

Yes. In 1933, the Book Club of California inaugurated its Quarterly News-Letter and Annual Printed Keepsake, both of which continue uninterrupted to this day. These publications include Book Club news and book-related articles and essays and are featured in libraries around the country, and around the world. They have also published their own history in The Book Club of California at One Hundred by Gary F. Kurutz, the now-retired Director of Special Collections at the California State Library in Sacramento.

The organization has operated since 1912 and, as a leader in the book community, the Book Club of California is mentioned many times in books, magazines, and local and national newspapers.

Additionally, The Book Club of California has been featured in several articles, including: “Secretly Awesome: The Book Club of California, a Boon to Bibliographies” by Hoodline in May 2016; “San Francisco’s Best Kept Secret: The Book Club of California” by The Mercury News in March 2016; and “Book Club of California” by Atlas Obscura in August 2015.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

On July 15, 2020 the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted [Resolution No. 1127](#) centering Preservation Planning on racial and social equity. Understanding the benefits, burdens, and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed Preservation Planning documents provide is part of the Department’s Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor’s Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which required all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The Legacy Business Program is deeply intertwined with these goals. One of the primary purposes of the Legacy Business Program is to maintain San Francisco's cultural fabric and to foster civic engagement and pride by assisting long-operating businesses remain in the city. The Legacy Business Registry was established to recognize longstanding, community-serving businesses that are valuable cultural assets of the city. These businesses, ranging from restaurants to art galleries to tire shops to community shelters, are key to sustaining the racial and social diversity in San Francisco and adding to the identity and character of our city and the many communities within it.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 47 Kearny Street (2023 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 153 Kearny Street (1912–1913)
- 760 Market Street (1913–1915)
- 68 Post Street (1916–1919)
- 310 Sansome Street (1919)
- 110 Sutter Street (1920–1939)
- 235 Montgomery Street (1939–1946)
- 549 Market Street (1946–1955)
- 545 Sutter Street (1955–1978)
- 312 Sutter Street, Suite 510 (1978–2010)
- 312 Sutter Street, Suite 500 (2010–2023)

Recommended by Applicant

- Promotion of Books and Book Art

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



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO.

HEARING DATE: January 7, 2026

Case No.: 2025-012176LBR
Business Name: The Book Club of California
Business Address: 47 Kearny Street
Zoning: C-3-O (Downtown-Office) Zoning District
80-130-F Height and Bulk District
Cultural District: Not Applicable
Block/Lot: 0310/003
Applicant: Kevin Kosik
47 Kearny Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Danny Sauter
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Heather Samuels - 628-652-7545
Heather.Samuels@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 47 KEARNY STREET, BLOCK/LOT 0310/003.

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 January 7, 2026, 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 The Book Club of California 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 The Book Club of California.

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 47 Kearny Street (2023 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 153 Kearny Street (1912–1913)
- 760 Market Street (1913–1915)
- 68 Post Street (1916–1919)
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- 312 Sutter Street, Suite 500 (2010–2023)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Businessz

- Promotion of Books and Book Art

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 2025-01176LBR to the Office of Small Business on January 7, 2026.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: January 7, 2026