



PORTSMOUTH SQUARE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT DRAFT PRESERVATION ALTERNATIVES

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San Francisco
Planning

PROJECT SITE



Project Site:

733 Kearny St., 750 Kearny St., & Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge



Project Site: 733 Kearny Street – Portsmouth Square



Photo courtesy Laura Del - Flickr, 2016



Portsmouth Square: History/Significance



Portsmouth Square, c. 1851 (ShapingSF)



Portsmouth Square, c. 1865 (SF Public Library)

- Established circa 1835
- Town Square
- Site of California's first public school (1847) and San Francisco's City Hall (1852)
- Important events at Portsmouth Square include announcing the end of Mexican rule and the discovery of gold in California
- In 1850 the Portsmouth Square neighborhood was home to San Francisco's earliest Chinese population

Portsmouth Square: History/Significance



- By 1870, Portsmouth Square was an important park in the Chinese community
- 1906 Earthquake Refugee site
- Redesigned as a park and garage in 1961
- Gathering space for local Chinatown Cultural events
- Eligible under Criterion 1 for important events and culturally significant community space
- Period of significance: c.1835 - Present

Portsmouth Square: Character-defining features



- Location and boundaries of Portsmouth Square
- Large open spaces for public gatherings and events
- General mixture of park furniture for socializing in small and medium-sized groups
- Dedicated area for child play
- Six identified historic plaques, monuments and statues

Project Site: 750 Kearny Street



750 Kearny Street: History/Significance



Clement Chen, 1971

San Francisco Examiner, 1971

- Chinatown-based community and civil rights group lobbied Board of Supervisors to dedicate the property to a Chinatown community center and museum.
- In 1966, the City selected Justice Enterprise to construct a hotel with a community-backed cultural center
- Chinese Culture Center opened on 3rd floor of hotel in 1973, accessible via the Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge
- Eligible under Criterion 1 for its association with the growing political strength of the Chinatown community, and Criterion 3 as a building in the Brutalist style designed by master architect Clement Chen
- Period of significance 1971-1973 (Criteria 1) and 1971 (Criteria 3)

750 Kearny Street: Overview of character-defining features



- Location & Footprint
- Massing consisting of a tall, slender tower situated on a pyramidal base and sculptural overhang at the capital level
- Board form concrete cladding
- Overall fenestration pattern and forms
- Narrow concrete projections on the east and west façades

750 Kearny Street: Overview of character-defining features



- Connection to Portsmouth Square via the elevated pedestrian bridge
- Full occupancy of third floor by local community group
- Dedicated entrance to third floor community space accessed via the Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge and stairs
- Porte cochere created by the elevated Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge

Project Site: **Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge**



Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge: History/Significance



Figure 44. Chen Chi-Kwan, undated (Chen Chi-kwan Education & Cultural Foundation)

- Chinese Culture Center secured an easement with the city's Department of Public Works and the support of Recreation and Park Department to construct an elevated pedestrian bridge to directly connect the Chinese Culture Center to Portsmouth Square
- Eligible under Criterion 1 for its association with the growing political strength of the Chinatown community
- Eligible under Criterion 3 as a structure designed in the Brutalist style designed by master architects Clement Chen and Chen Chi-Kwan
- Period of significance 1971

Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge: Character-defining features



Portsmouth Square and Bridge, 1974

- Reinforced concrete construction
- Girders and two-column bents with tapered legs
- Access points at the second and third stories of the hotel tower at the east end of bridge and from Portsmouth Square at the west end
- Angular platform at the east end with a central staircase flanked by two shorter staircases
- Exterior cladding featuring rectangular concrete panels decorated with vertical lines from wood formwork
- Hotel (750 Kearny Street) porte cochere created by elevated span of bridge

Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge: Character-defining features



Typical lantern on the pedestrian bridge (ARG, January 2019)



- Decorated with vertical lines from wood formwork
- Closed railing with smooth concrete cap
- Brick paving
- Curved interior walls
- Geometric light fixtures
- Backless concrete benches in two lengths
- Dedicated entrance to Chinese Culture Center at the third floor of 750 Kearny Street

PROPOSED PROJECT

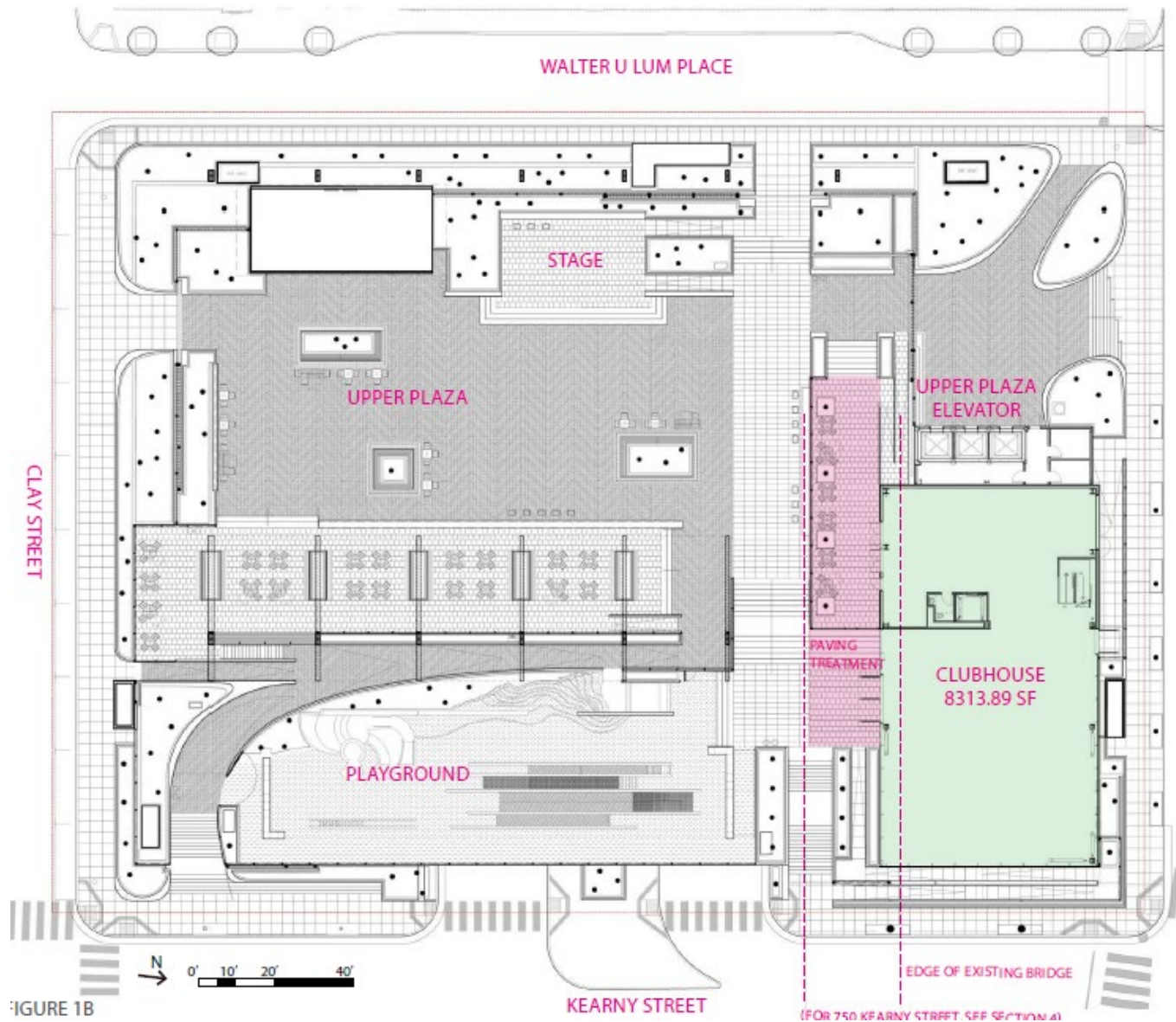


Proposed Project: Project Objectives

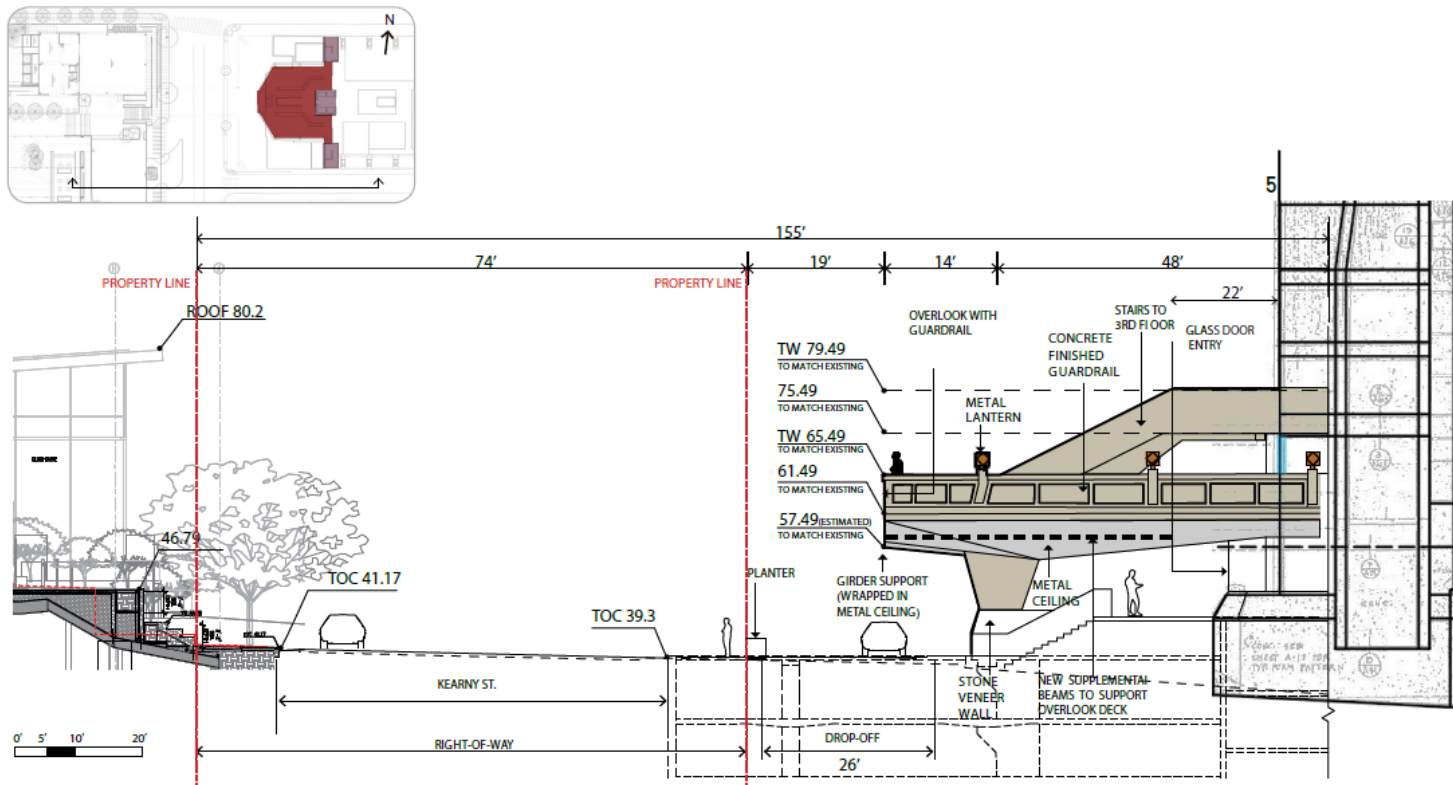


1. Provide a Renovated Park that is Sensitive to the Cultural and Historic Setting of the Property
2. Align Park Renovation with Community Input
3. Maximize Park Cohesiveness and Usability
4. Create a Safe and Secure Park and Streetscape
5. Maintain and Preserve the Existing Garage and its Operations
6. Create a Sustainable and Easy-To-Maintain Park

Proposed Project: Project Description



Proposed Project: Project Description



- Substantial demolition of Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge
- Eastern terminus retained and re-used as an outdoor terrace
- Direct and independent access to Chinese Culture Center removed

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PRESERVATION ALTERNATIVES

1. FULL PRESERVATION

2. PARTIAL PRESERVATION



Draft Preservation Alternatives: Project Impacts

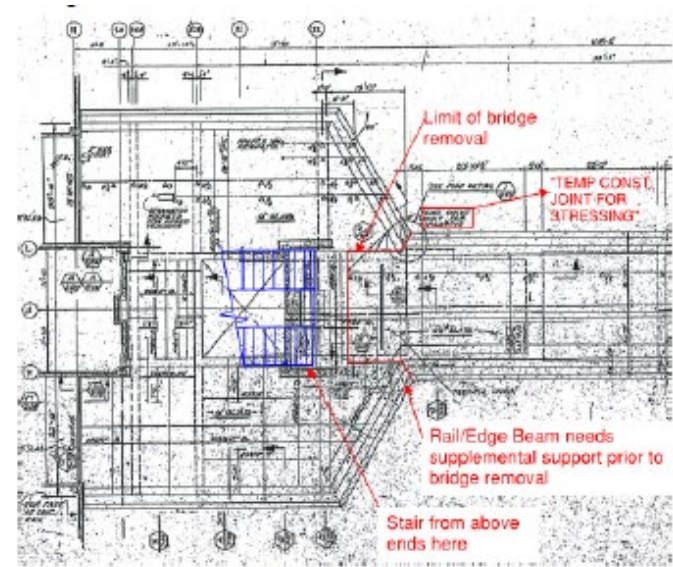
- Significant and Unavoidable Impact to historic resources associated with demolition of the Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge
- Mitigations Include:
 - Plaque/Monument Removal, Protection & Relocation
 - Interpretation & Oral History
 - Salvage
 - HABS/HAER Documentation of Historical Resources



OpenSFHistory.org

Draft Preservation Alternatives: Other Considerations

- Project sponsor and planning department explored a range of alternatives that considered the Bridge's symbolic and physical connection between Chinatown and the Chinese Culture Center
- Some alternatives were rejected because of:
 - Structural limitations of the Bridge
 - Private Property constraints



Draft Preservation Alternatives: Other Considerations



- Existing Park infrastructure including Restrooms and Garage Elevator and Stairs
- Portsmouth Square Garage structural requirements
- Maximize clubhouse glazing and opportunities for natural light
- Avoid shadows in the park

Draft Preservation Alternatives: Comparison Table

	PROPOSED PROJECT	FULL PRESERVATION ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL PRESERVATION ALTERNATIVE	EXISTING SITE
Clubhouse (sf)	8,313 sf	8,313 sf	6,651 sf	1500 sf
Upper Plaza Event Space (sf)	8,000 sf	8,000 sf	8,000 sf	4,000 sf
Shade Structure	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Stage	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Playground (sf)	6,500 sf	6,500 sf	6,500 sf	5,000 sf
Retention of Kearny St. Pedestrian Bridge	No	Yes	No	Yes

Draft Preservation Alternatives: Full Preservation Alternative

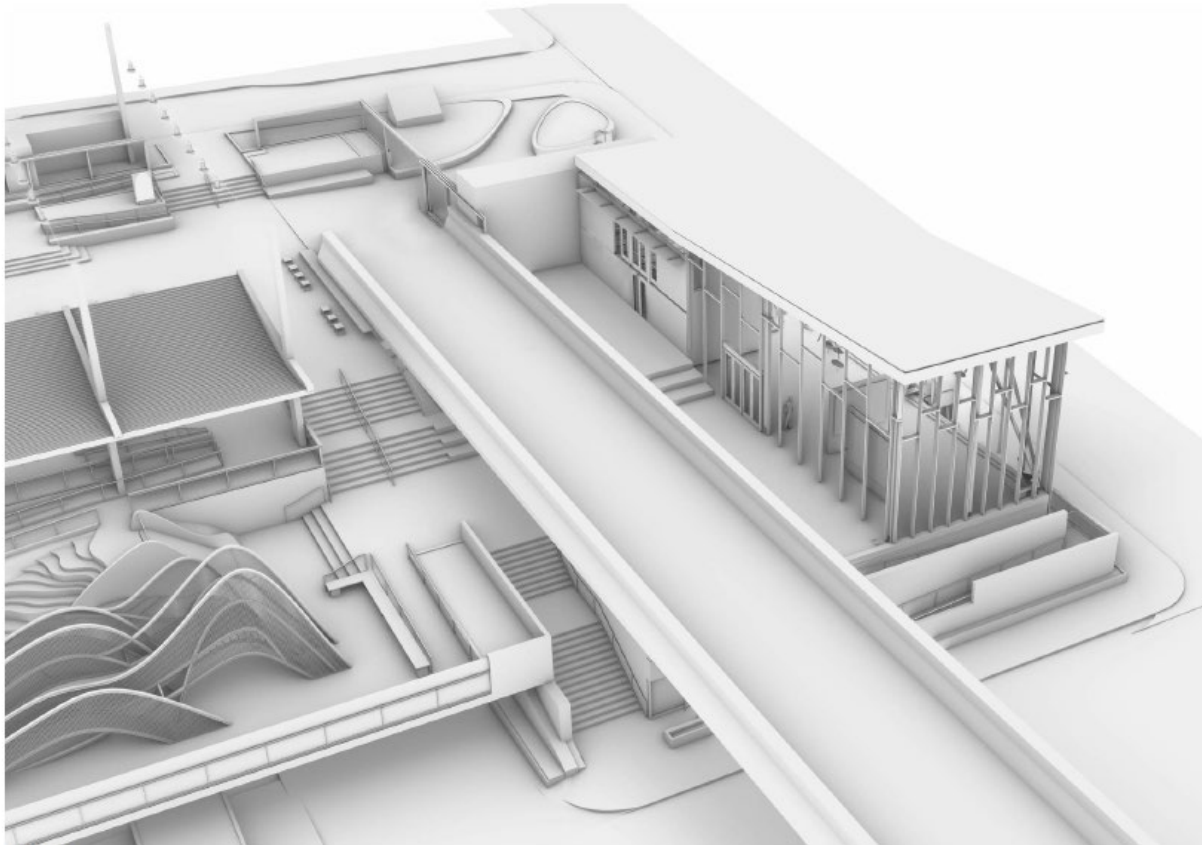
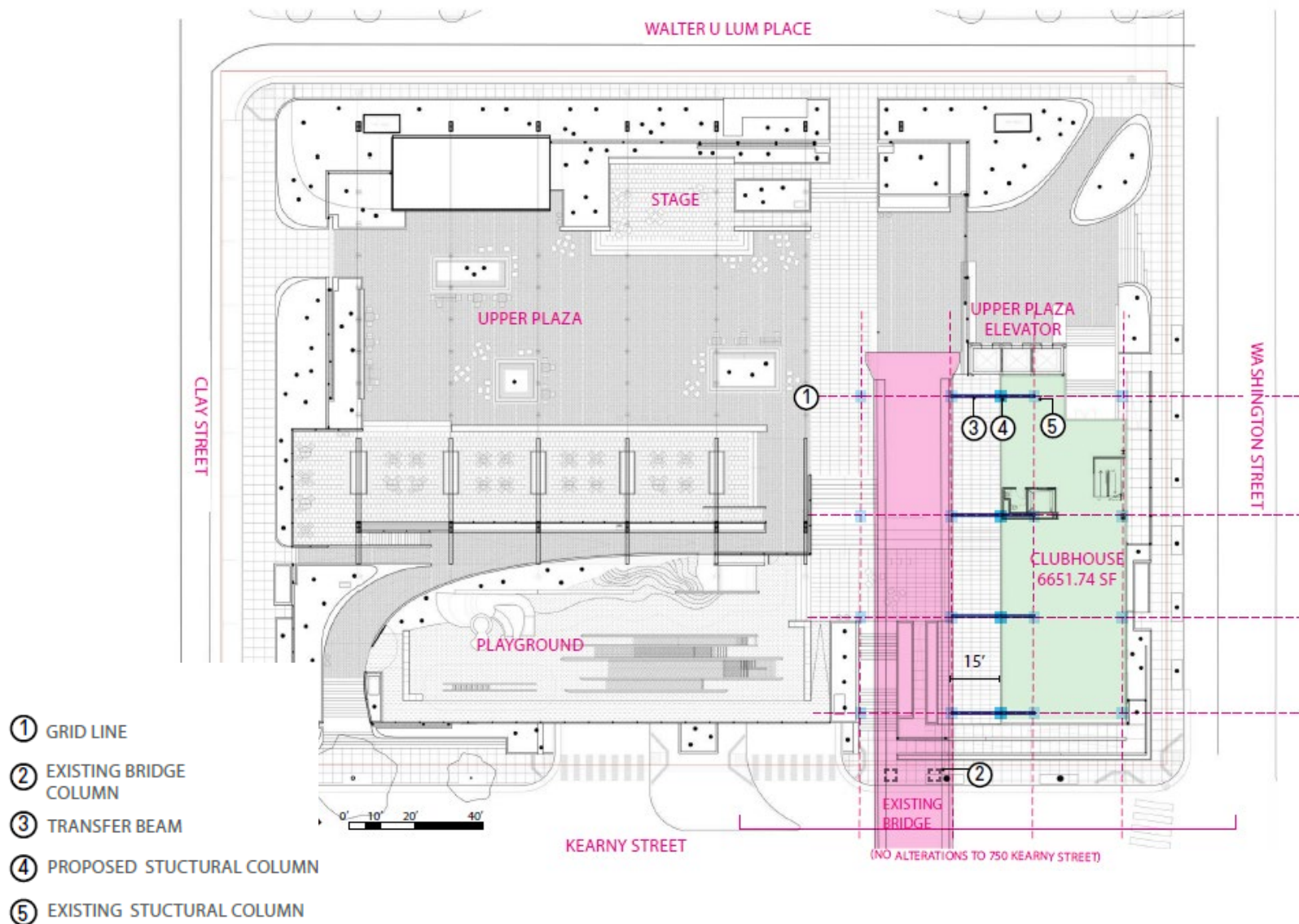


FIGURE 3C

- Implements nearly all Proposed Project design elements
- Retains Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge
- Reduces clubhouse footprint from 8,313 sf under Proposed Project to 6,551 sf
- Meets or partially meets the basic objectives of the project

Draft Preservation Alternatives: Full Preservation Alternative



Draft Preservation Alternatives: **Partial Preservation Alternative**

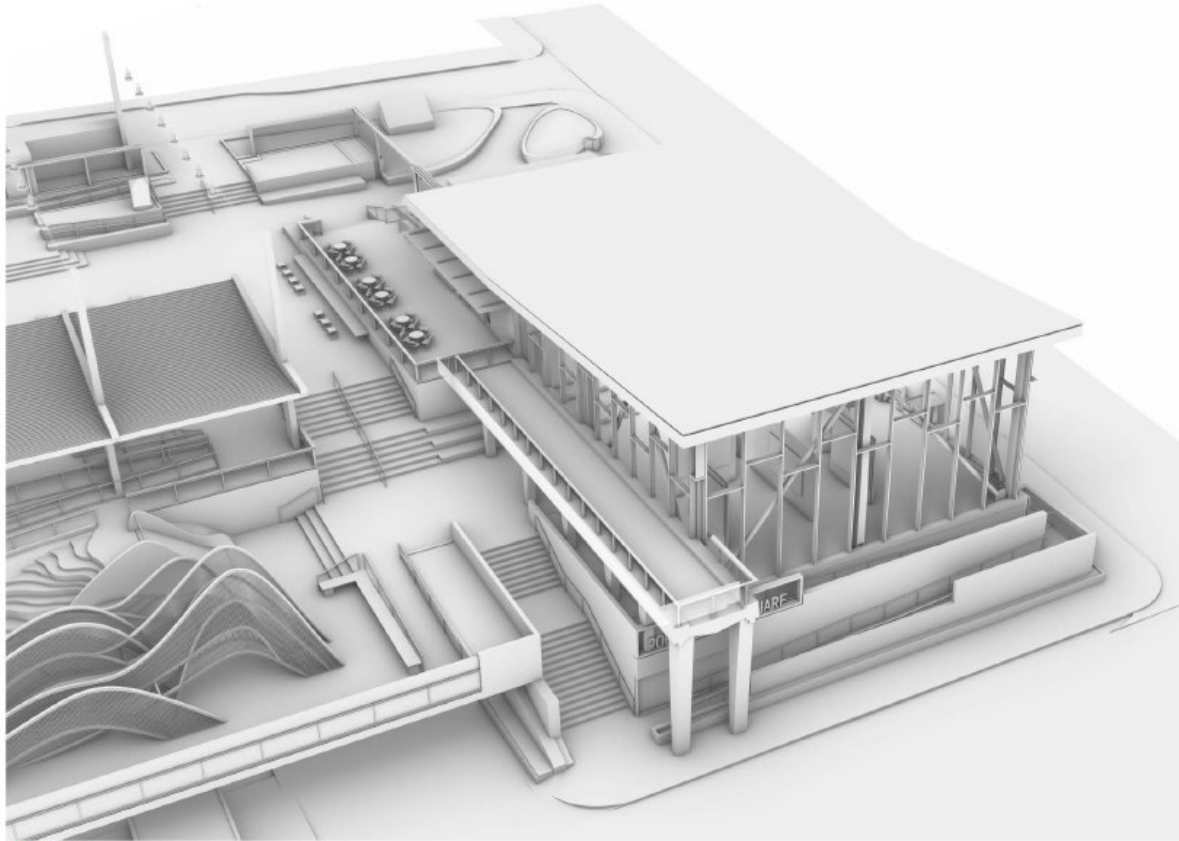
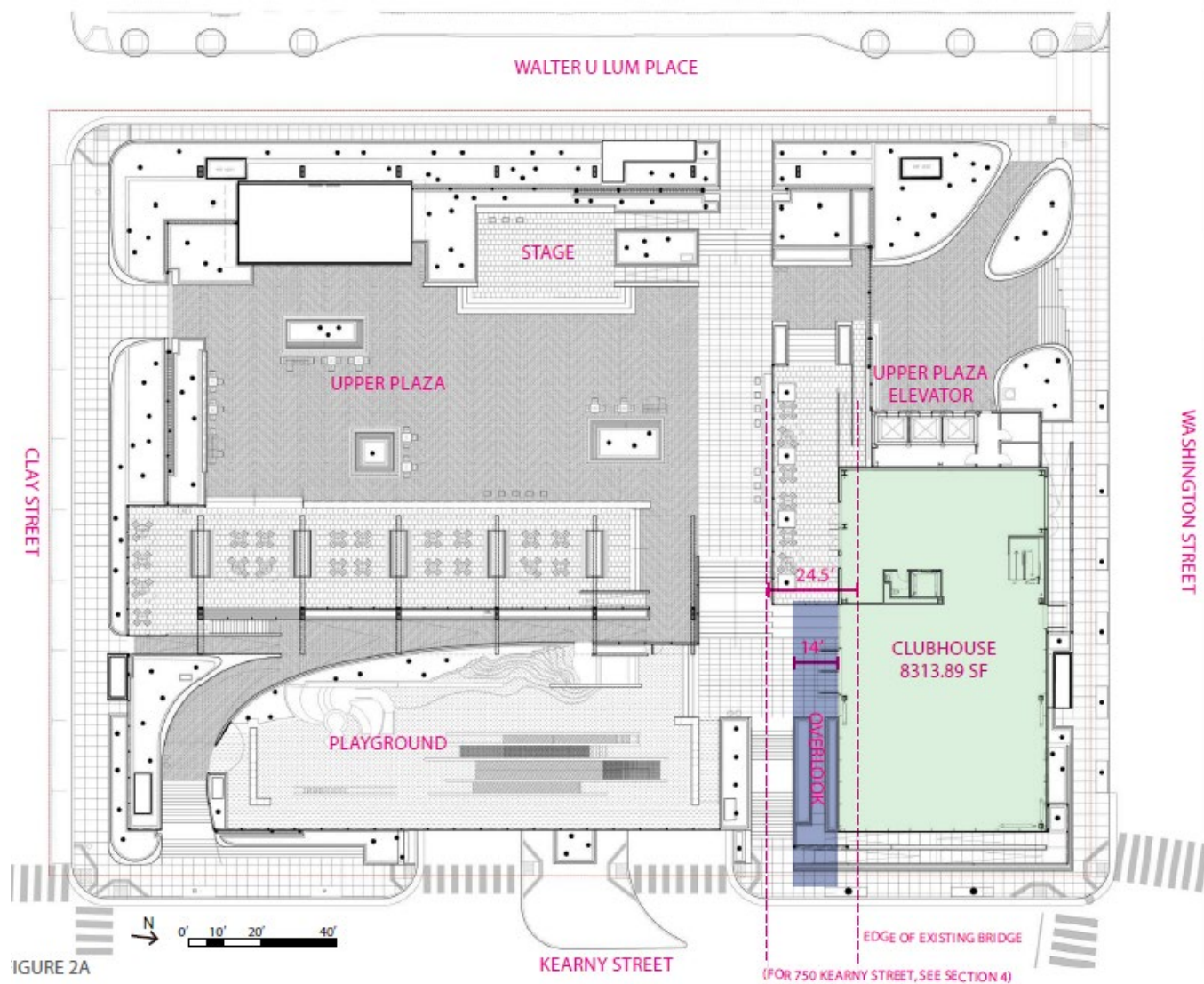
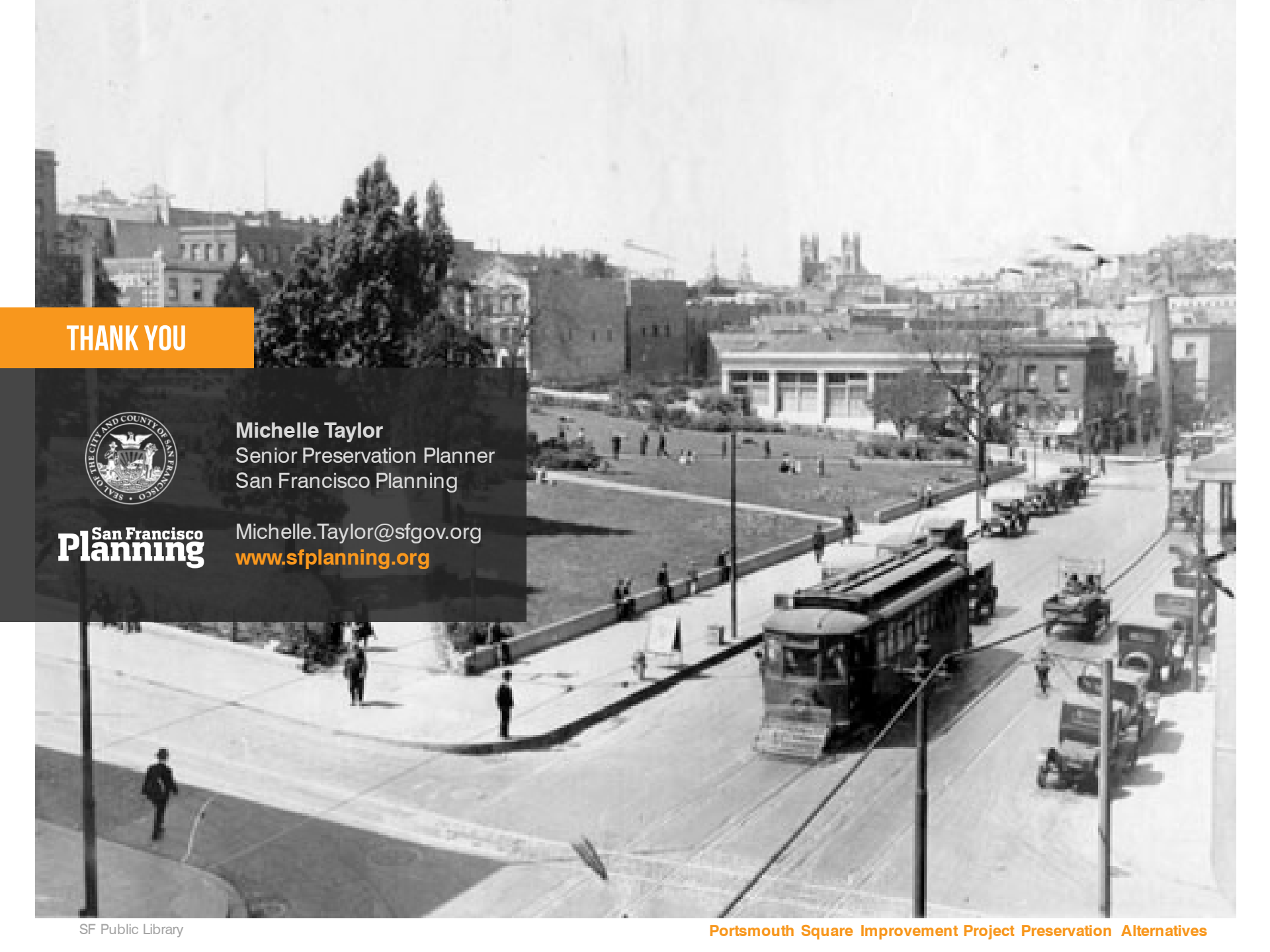


FIGURE 2B

- Implements all Proposed Project design elements,
- Proposed clubhouse footprint and design would not differ from Proposed Project
- Demolition of Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge
- New overlook extending to Kearny Street as a symbolic representation of the Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge
- Meets or partially meets the basic objectives of the project

Draft Preservation Alternatives: Partial Preservation Alternative





THANK YOU



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