



PORTSMOUTH SQUARE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

DRAFT EIR

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Senior Preservation Planner / August 18, 2021 / Historic Preservation Commission



San Francisco
Planning

PROJECT SITE



Project Site:

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



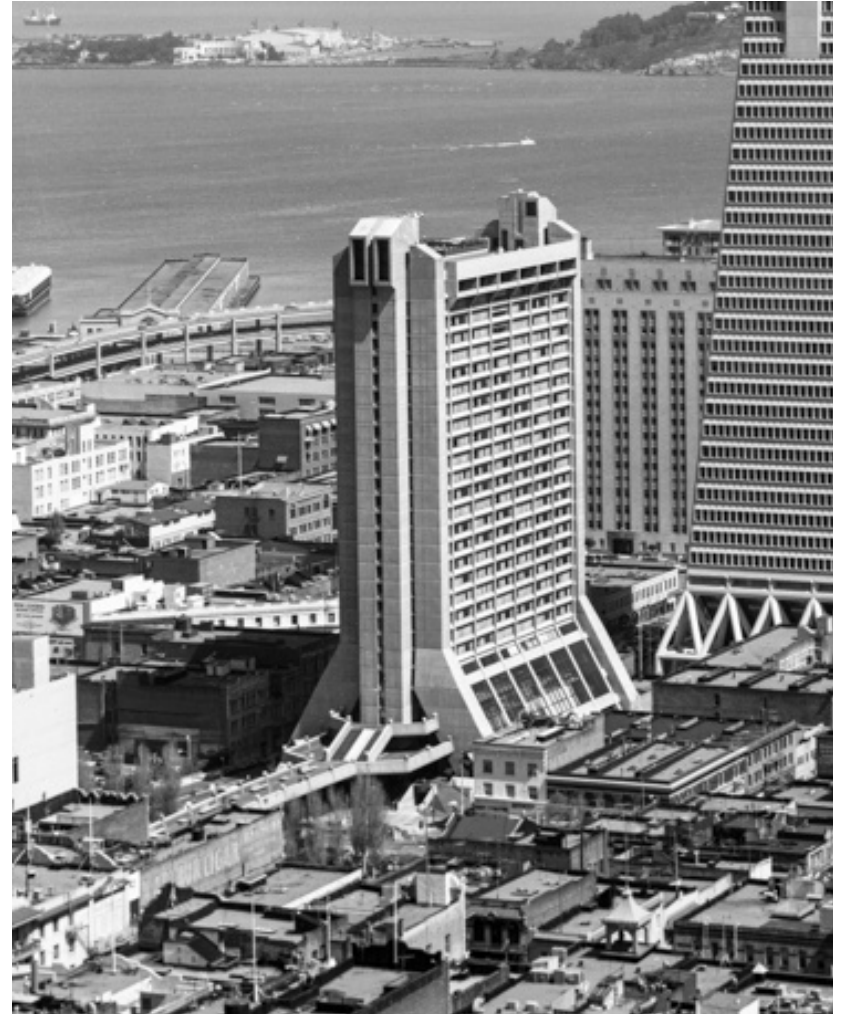
Project Site



Portsmouth Square (733 Kearny Street)



Kearny Street Pedestrian Bridge



750 Kearny Street

HISTORIC RESOURCE STATUS



Portsmouth Square: History/Significance



Portsmouth Square, c. 1865 and 1960's (SF Public Library)

- Established circa 1835
- Site of California's first public school (1847) and San Francisco's City Hall (1852)
- In 1850 the Portsmouth Square neighborhood was home to San Francisco's earliest Chinese population
- 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

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
- Eligible under 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



M. Taylor (top) and Google Maps (bottom)

- Location & Footprint
- Form & Massing
- Board form concrete cladding
- Overall fenestration pattern and forms
- Narrow concrete projections on the east and west façades
- Connection to Portsmouth Square and a 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

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



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

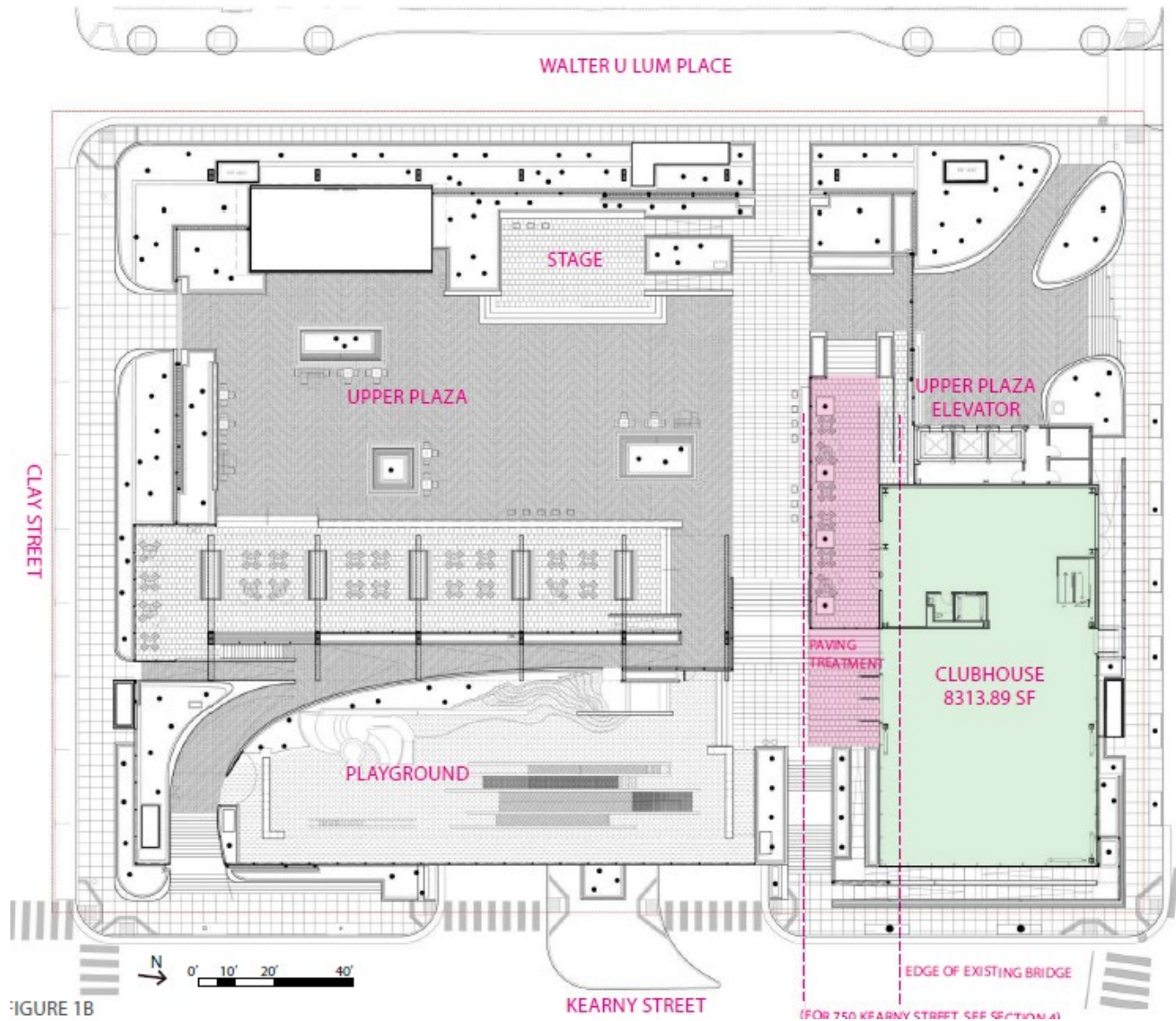


- Reinforced concrete construction
Closed railing with smooth concrete cap
- Brick paving & curved interior walls
- Geometric light fixtures
- Backless concrete benches in two lengths
- Dedicated entrance to Chinese Culture Center at the third floor of 750 Kearny Street

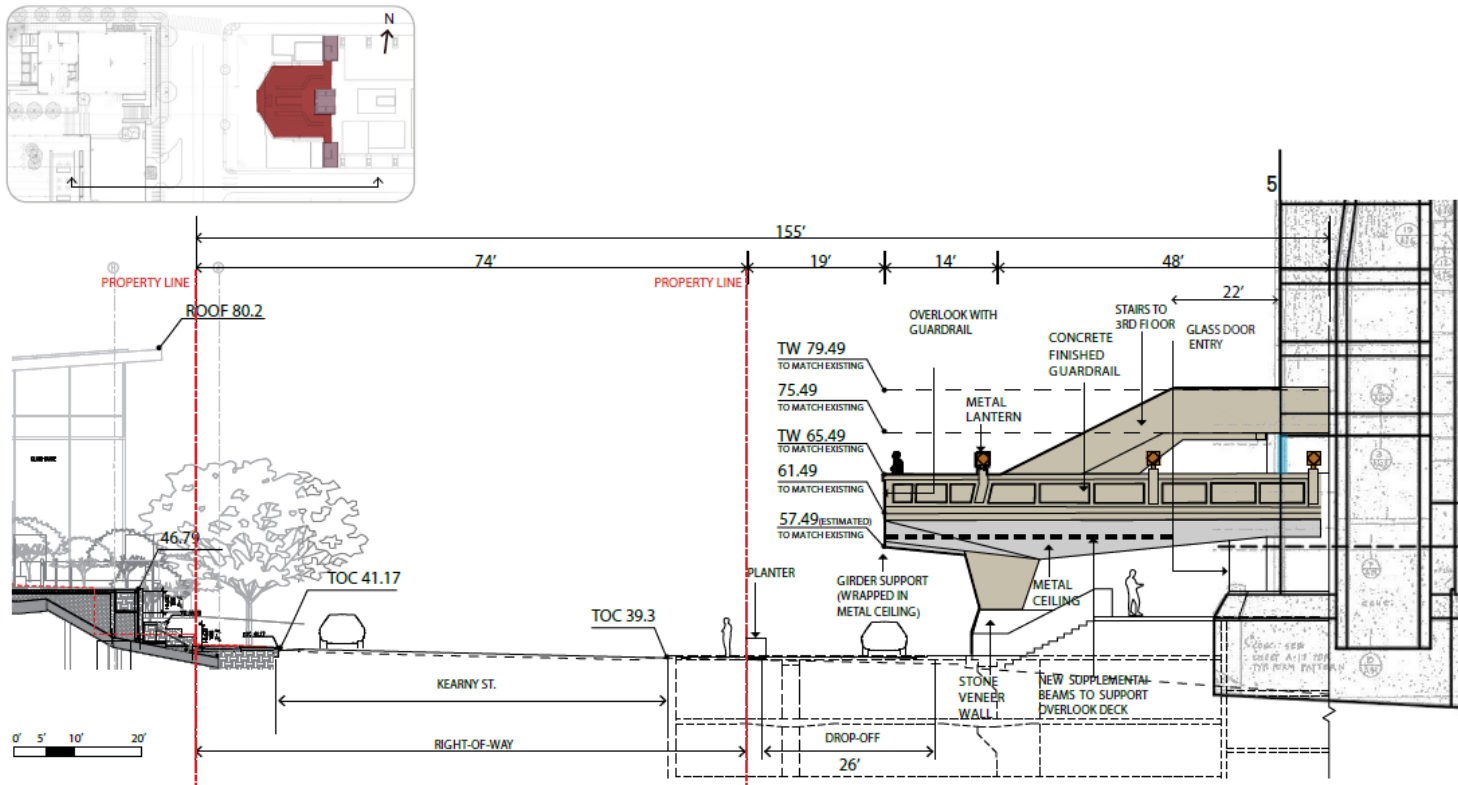
PROPOSED PROJECT



Proposed Project: Project 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

Draft Preservation Alternatives: Project Impacts

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



OpenSFHistory.org

PRESERVATION ALTERNATIVES

A. NO PROJECT

B. FULL PRESERVATION

C. PARTIAL PRESERVATION



Preservation Alternatives: No Project



- No demolition or modification to any character-defining features of the historic resources
- Does not meet the basic objectives of the project

Preservation Alternatives: Full Preservation Alternative

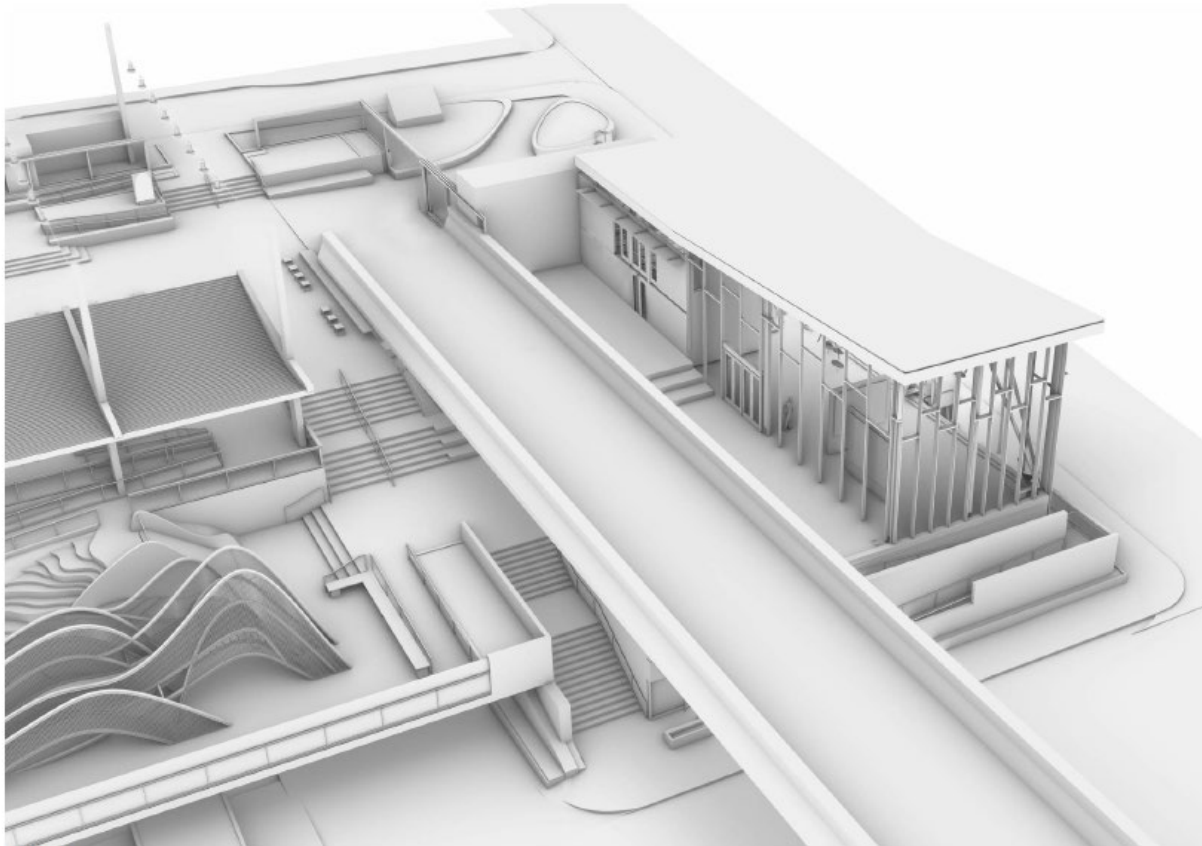


FIGURE 3C

- Implements nearly all Proposed Project design elements
- Reduces clubhouse footprint from 8,313 sf under Proposed Project to 6,551 sf
- No demolition or modification to any character-defining features of the historic resources
- Meets or partially meets the basic objectives of the project

Preservation Alternatives: **Partial Preservation Alternative**

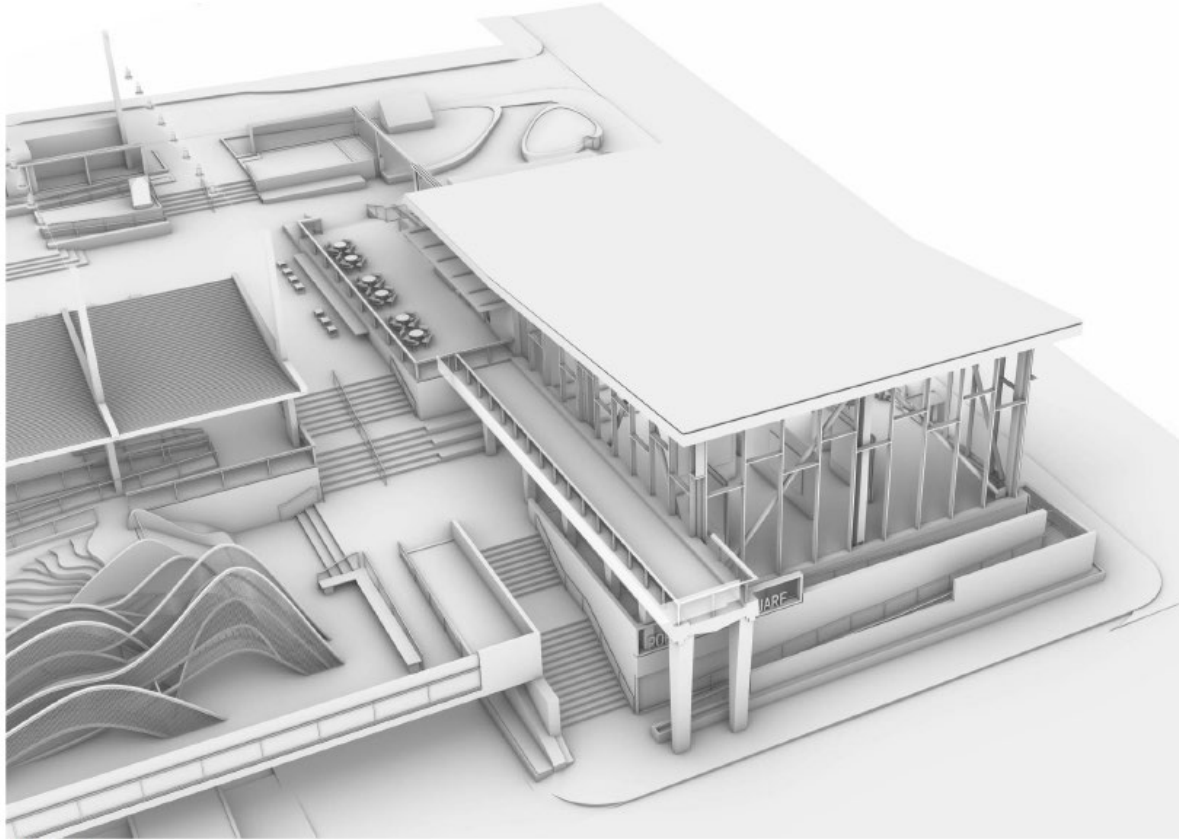


FIGURE 2B

- 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

Preservation Alternatives: Partial Preservation Alternative

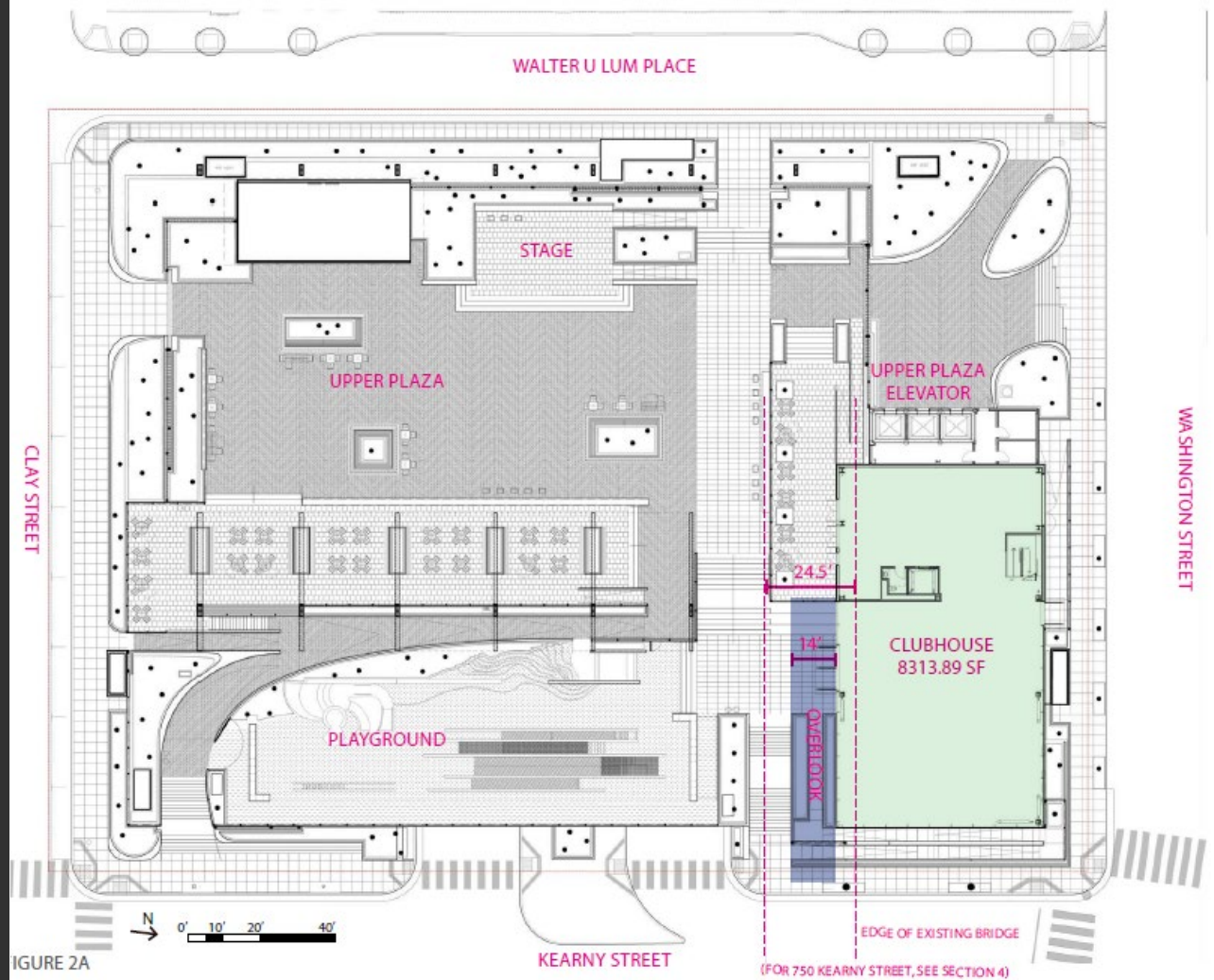
Partial Preservation Alternative

Impact:

- Significant and Unavoidable with Mitigation (SUM)

Mitigation Measures:

- Interpretation & Oral History
- Salvage Plan
- HABS/HAER Documentation of Historical Resources



Environmental Review/**Public Outreach**

- September 21, 2020 – Issued Notice Of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR, and Notice of Availability (NOA) of the NOP
 - NOA and NOP translated into Chinese
 - NOA of NOP Distribution – English + Chinese language versions distributed together
- April 9, 2021 - Tribal Notification regarding Tribal Cultural Resources
 - Consultation with Native American representative on mitigation measures
- August 4, 2021 – Notice of Availability (NOA) of a Draft EIR and Notice of Public Hearing
 - NOA translated into Chinese
 - Development and distribution of a Draft EIR Summary Sheet
 - NOA and Draft EIR summary sheet - English + Chinese language versions distributed together



A Portsmouth Square patron reviews the Chinese language DEIR Summary Sheet site posting at the park's upper level.



THANK YOU



**San Francisco
Planning**

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September 9, 2021 - Planning
Commission Draft EIR Hearing

September 20, 2021 - Draft EIR
Comment Period Ends

Send written comments to:

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