



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Landmark Designation Case Report

Hearing Date: February 6, 2019
Case No.: 2017-012291DES
Project Address: 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building)
Zoning: RM-3 (Residential-Mixed, Medium Density)
Block/Lot: 0676/027
Property Owner: Golden Gate Institute
2031 Bush Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
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PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS & SURROUNDING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Kinmon Gakuen Building (APN 0676/027) is located on the south side of Bush Street between Webster and Buchanan Streets in a residential area of Japantown. Completed in 1926 and designed in the Mediterranean Revival style, the subject property was purpose-built as an educational facility for Japanese language and culture school, Kinmon Gakuen ("Golden Gate Institute"). It features two-stories with basement massing, an irregular plan set back from the front property line, and a double stair and raised porch at the entrance. The building was constructed along the property line to the west and north (its primary elevation) and contains a small side yard along its eastern façade that is accessed via a gated entrance along Bush Street. Other prominent features include its flat-capped terra cotta roof, stucco cladding, and wood sash doors and windows. The parcel is located within an RM-3 (Residential-Mixed, Medium Density) Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is the consideration of the initiation of landmark designation of The Kinmon Gakuen Building as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1, and recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve of such designation.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

The Planning Department has determined that actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment (specifically in this case, landmark designation) are exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical).

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

The Urban Design Element of the San Francisco General Plan contains the following relevant objectives and policies:

OBJECTIVE 2: Conservation of Resources that provide a sense of nature, continuity with the past, and freedom from overcrowding.

POLICY 4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

Designating significant historic resources as local landmarks will further continuity with the past because the buildings will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Landmark designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made.

SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1 – GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Code Section 101.1 – Eight Priority Policies establishes and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the proposed designation is consistent with the priority policies in that:

- a. The proposed designation will further Priority Policy No. 7, that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved. Landmark designation of The Kinmon Gakuen Building will help to preserve an important historical resource that is significant for its associations with the development of the Japanese American and African American communities in San Francisco during the twentieth century. It is also an excellent example of an educational building designed in the Mediterranean Revival style.

BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS ACTIONS

On August 17, 2016, The Kinmon Gakuen Building was added to the Landmark Designation Work Program as part of the Department's San Francisco Sites of Civil Rights Project.

The property was also previously identified as an important building for its association with Kinmon Gakuen in the *Japantown Historic Context Statement* (2011) and in the *Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy* (2013).

OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

If the Historic Preservation Commission decides to initiate designation of the subject property as an Article 10 landmark at its February 6, 2019 hearing, the item will again be considered by the Commission at a future hearing. During this subsequent hearing, the Commission will decide whether to forward the item to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation supportive of

designation. The nomination would then be considered at a future Board of Supervisors hearing for formal Article 10 landmark designation.

APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS

ARTICLE 10

Section 1004 of the Planning Code authorizes the landmark designation of an individual structure or other feature or an integrated group of structures and features on a single lot or site, having special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, as a landmark. Section 1004.1 also outlines that landmark designation may be initiated by the Board of Supervisors or the Historic Preservation Commission and the initiation shall include findings in support. Section 1004.2 states that once initiated, the proposed designation is referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for a report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve, disapprove or modify the proposal.

Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, if the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the resolution of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors and without referral to the Planning Commission. The Board of Supervisors shall hold a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation.

In the case of the initiation of a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission shall refer its recommendation to the Planning Commission pursuant to Section 1004.2(c). The Planning Commission shall have 45 days to provide review and comment on the proposed designation and address the consistency of the proposed designation with the General Plan, Section 101.1 priority policies, the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation, and the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area. These comments shall be sent to the Board of Supervisors in the form of a resolution.

Section 1004(b) requires that the designating ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors shall include the location and boundaries of the landmark site, a description of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation, and a description of the particular features that should be preserved.

Section 1004.4 states that if the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days.

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK CRITERIA

The Historic Preservation Commission on February 4, 2009, by Resolution No. 001, adopted the National Register Criteria as its methodology for recommending landmark designation of historic resources. Under the National Register Criteria, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association, and that are associated with events that have made a significant

contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or properties that have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.

PUBLIC / NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

The Department is not aware of any opposition to the landmark designation of 2031 Bush Street. The Department has received one letter of support, which is included in this packet.

PROPERTY OWNER INPUT

The property owner, the Golden Gate Institute/Kinmon Gakuen, is supportive of landmark designation. On July 27, 2017, the property owner requested that the HPC prioritize landmark designation for The Kinmon Gakuen Building. That letter is included in this packet.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The case report and analysis under review was prepared by Department preservation staff. The Department has determined that the subject property meets the requirements for Article 10 eligibility as an individual landmark. The justification for its inclusion is explained in the attached Landmark Designation Report.

SIGNIFICANCE

The subject property gains its significance from its association with the social, cultural, and educational enrichment of Japanese Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century as the home of Japanese language and culture school, Kinmon Gakuen. It was one of four purpose-built community facilities whose construction was funded by the local Japanese American community in San Francisco's *Nihojinmachi* ("Japanese People's Town"), later known as Japantown.

The building is also associated with the evacuation, relocation, and incarceration of U.S. citizens and residents of Japanese descent during World War II. Following President Franklin D. Roosevelt's signing of Executive Order No. 9066, Kinmon Gakuen was forced to cease operations and its building was taken over by the federal government for use as a processing center where citizens and non-citizens of Japanese ancestry were required to report before they were incarcerated and relocated to concentration camps across the United States.

During Japanese internment, the African American community stewarded many of the properties that had been vacated by Japanese Americans in Japantown, including The Kinmon Gakuen Building. 2031 Bush Street, thus, is also significant for its association with community organizing and activism among African Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century, as home of the Booker T. Washington Community Services Center from 1942 to 1952. The center provided African Americans, especially youth, with a space for social, educational, and recreational

opportunities. The organization supported Japanese Americans upon their return to the neighborhood after the war by establishing hostels for those in need of housing. In 1952, Kinmon Gakuen reoccupied the building and the Booker T. Washington Community Services Center moved into its new permanent location at 800 Presidio.

The building is also an excellent example of an educational building designed in the Mediterranean Revival architectural style in San Francisco.

UNDERREPRESENTED LANDMARK TYPES

The proposed landmark designation addresses one previously identified underrepresented landmark types: landmarks significant for cultural associations. Specifically, The Kinmon Gakuen Building is significant for its association with Japanese American history in San Francisco. There are currently no designated San Francisco landmarks specifically related to Japanese American history.

INTEGRITY

The Kinmon Gakuen Building maintains a high level of integrity. See page 25 of attached Landmark Designation Report for further analysis.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Exterior and interior character-defining features of the building are identified in the attached Landmark Designation Report beginning on page 26-27.

BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

The proposed Landmark site consists of Assessor's Parcel Block. No. 0676, Lot No. 027.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Based on the Department's analysis, The Kinmon Gakuen Building is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation for its association with Japanese American and African American history of the twentieth century, as described above, and as an excellent example of an educational and community facility designed in the Mediterranean Revival style. The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission initiate the proposed designation of **2031 Bush Street** as a San Francisco landmark.

The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications of the proposed initiation of The Kinmon Gakuen Building as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Planning Code Section 1004.1. If the Historic Preservation Commission approves the initiation, a copy of the motion of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors, which holds a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation (Section 1004.4). If the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days (Section 1004.5).

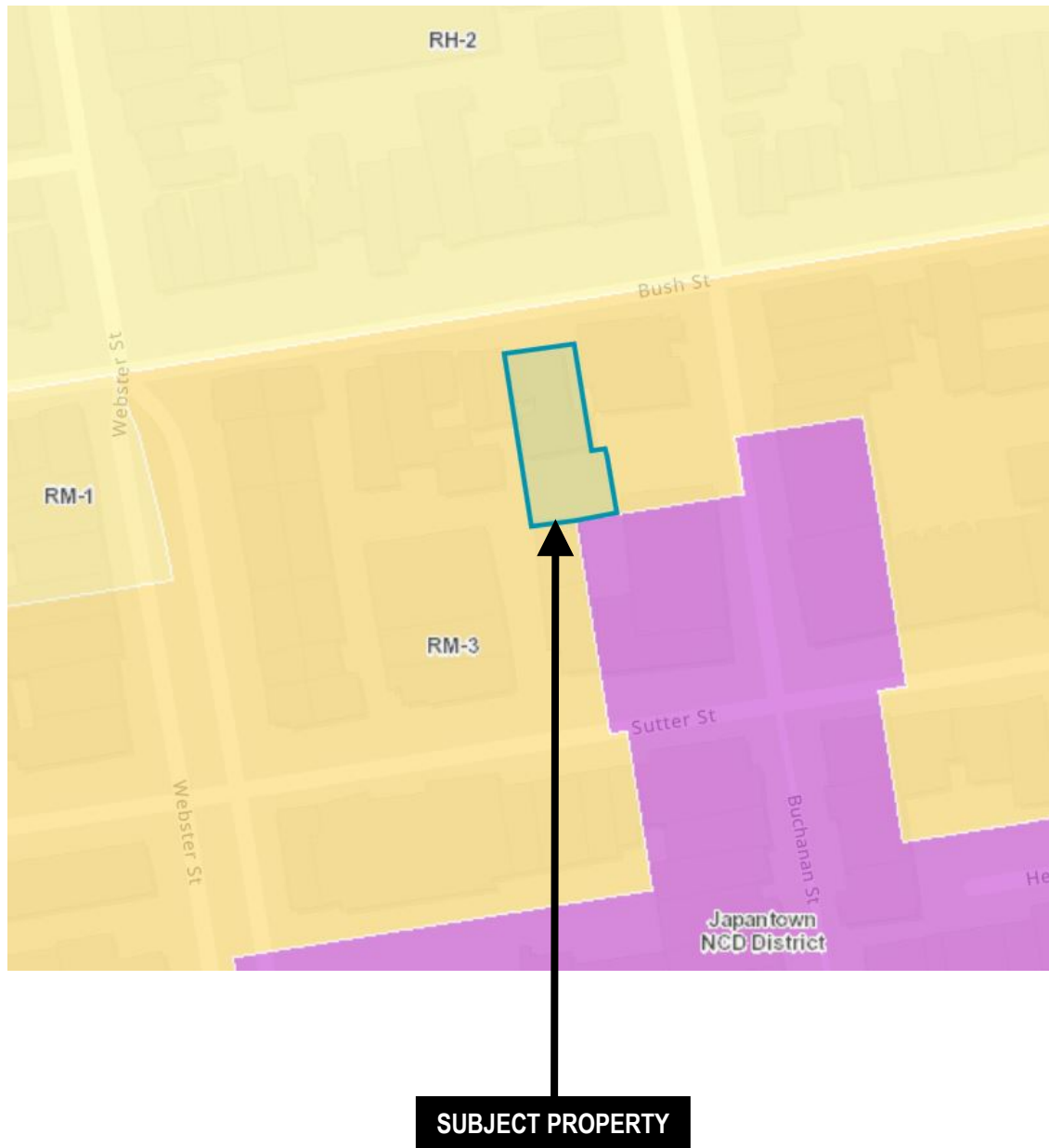
ATTACHMENTS

- A. Exhibits
- B. Draft Resolution initiating designation
- C. Draft Landmark Designation Report
- D. Draft Ordinance
- E. Letters of Support

Parcel Map

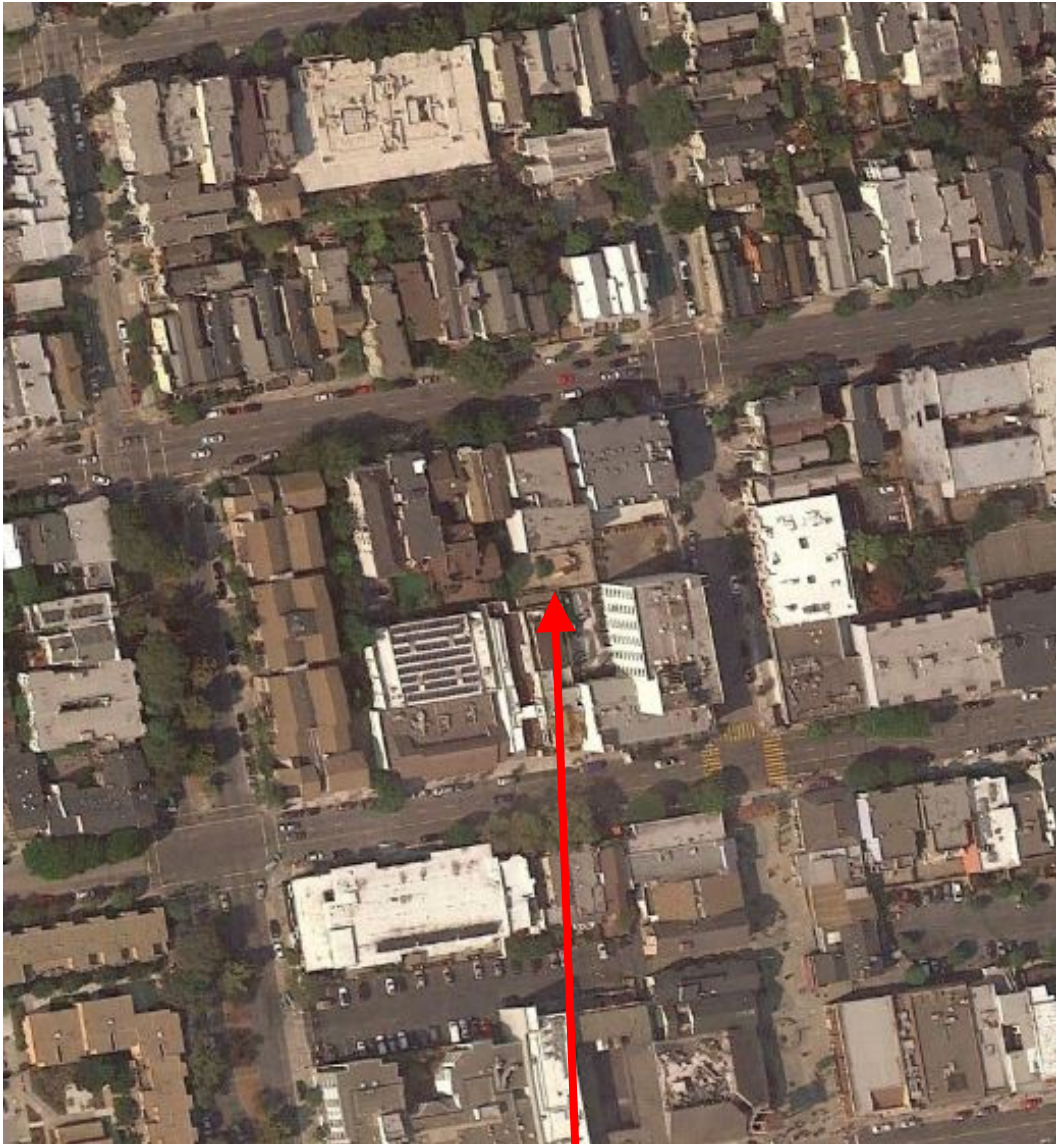


Zoning Map



Article 10 Landmark Designation
Case Number 2017-012291DES
The Kinmon Gakuen Building
231 Bush Street

Aerial Photo

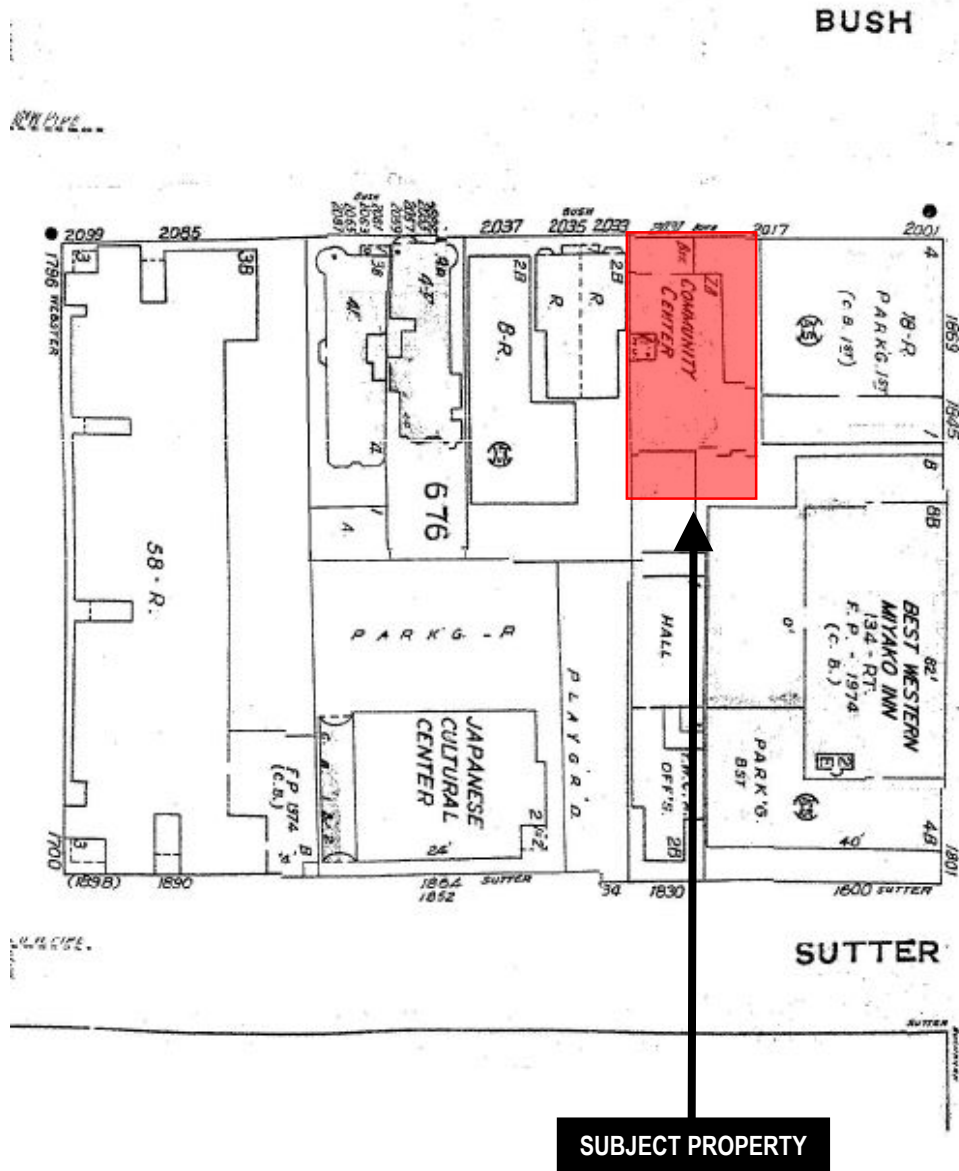


SUBJECT PROPERTY



Article 10 Landmark Designation
Case Number 2017-012291DES
The Kinmon Gakuen Building
2031 Bush Street

Sanborn Map*



*The Sanborn Maps in San Francisco have not been updated since 1998, and this map may not accurately reflect existing conditions.



Article 10 Landmark Designation
Case Number 2017-012291DES
The Kinmon Gakuen Building
2031 Bush Street

Site Photo



Article 10 Landmark Designation
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The Kinmon Gakuen Building
2031 Bush Street



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution No. XXX

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2019

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Case No. 2017-012291DES
Project: 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building)
Re: Initiation of Article 10 Landmark Designation
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Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
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RESOLUTION TO INITIATE DESIGNATION OF 2031 BUSH STREET (AKA THE KINMON GAKUEN BUILDING), ASSESSOR'S PARCEL BLOCK NO. 0676, LOT NO. 027, AS ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK.

1. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of August 17, 2016, added 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027, to the Landmark Designation Work Program;
2. WHEREAS, Department Staff who meets the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards prepared the Landmark Designation Report for 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027, which was reviewed for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of February 6, 2019, reviewed Department staff's analysis of 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027, historical significance per Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated February 6, 2019; and
4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027, nomination is in the form prescribed by the HPC and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby initiates designation of 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building), Assessor's Block 0676, Lot 027, as a Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on February 6, 2019.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED:



DRAFT LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



The Kinmon Gakuen Building 2031 Bush Street

Landmark No. XXX

DRAFT Report dated February 6, 2019

Cover: The Kinmon Gakuen Building, 2018

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a seven-member body that makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the designation of landmark buildings and districts. The regulations governing landmarks and landmark districts are found in Article 10 of the Planning Code.

The HPC is staffed by the San Francisco Planning Department.

Only language contained within the Article 10 designation ordinance, adopted by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, should be regarded as final.

The Kinmon Gakuen Building

2031 Bush Street

Built: 1926
Architect: William C. Hays

This Article 10 Landmark Designation Report provides documentation and assessment to demonstrate the historical, cultural, and or architectural significance for the purpose of local designation as a San Francisco City Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code. This document may reference previous studies and supporting documentation, such as historic context statements, surveys, state or national historic registries, and or other comparable documents. For more information regarding supporting documentation and source material, please reference the materials listed in the bibliography.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

Events: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of our history.

Architecture: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and the work of a master.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

The period of significance for Kinmon Gakuen is 1926 to 1952.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kinmon Gakuen Building is significant for its association with the social, cultural, and educational enrichment of Japanese Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century as the home of Japanese language and culture school, Kinmon Gakuen, from 1926 to the present. The organization was established in 1911 but operated at a different location for the first 15 years of operation. 2031 Bush Street is the site of its second location and longtime home. It was one of four purpose-built community facilities constructed in San Francisco's *Nihojinmachi* ("Japanese People's Town"), that was built with funds raised by the local Japanese American community. Through a variety of educational, cultural, and social programs, Kinmon Gakuen has worked to preserve Japanese language and culture in San Francisco for over a century.

The building is also associated with the experience of Japanese and Japanese Americans in San Francisco during World War II following the signing of Executive Order No. 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The executive order, signed in 1942, authorized the creation of military zones and paved the way for Japanese internment, which lasted from 1942 to 1945. Japanese language schools were under scrutiny by the U.S. military due to suspicions that they played a role in fostering pro-Japanese nationalist agendas. Kinmon Gakuen was forced to shut down as a result and its building was seized by the federal government for use as a processing center where citizens and non-citizens of Japanese ancestry were required to report before they were incarcerated and relocated to concentration camps across the United States.

During Japanese internment, the growing African American community in San Francisco's Western Addition stewarded many of the properties that had been vacated by Japanese Americans in Japantown, including The Kinmon Gakuen Building. The building, thus, is also significant for its association with community organizing and activism among African Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century, as home of the Booker T. Washington Community Services Center from 1942 to 1952. The center provided African Americans, especially youth, with a space for social, educational, and recreational opportunities. After World War II, the Booker T. Washington Community Services Center supported returning Japanese and Japanese Americans by establishing hostels for those in need of shelter. By 1952, the Booker T. Washington Community Services Center moved into its permanent home at 800 Presidio Avenue and Kinmon Gakuen once again occupied 2031 Bush Street.

The building is also an excellent example of an educational building designed in the Mediterranean Revival architectural style in San Francisco.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The Kinmon Gakuen Building was constructed in 1926 on the south side of Bush Street between Buchanan and Webster streets. It was designed by Bay Area architect, William C. Hays, a professor of architecture at Berkeley, who designed numerous educational facilities throughout California. Hays designed 2031 Bush Street in the Mediterranean Revival style, which was a popular design aesthetic of the period, particularly for educational facilities in the Bay Area.

The subject property is located on a roughly 58' x 137.5 L-shaped lot. It is built along the property line at the west elevation and has a small setback along the eastern façade as well as a slight front setback along the primary elevation that aligns with Bush Street. The subject property has a significant rear yard where a courtyard with a playground allows for recreational space. The property is a wood-frame structure with two-stories and a basement massing.



Detail of main entry at front (north) façade, view south.

The building's front (north) façade along Bush Street retains materials original to the building including Mission terra cotta tile coping at the cornice, multi-lite wood windows, and wooden casement windows with divided lites, and stucco cladding. It features a prominent double stair with risers and treads clad in terra cotta tile, separated by a concrete wall with decorative pilasters and a water table. The building's main entrance is set within a segmental arched portal with decorative tile surround. A vertical sign reading, "Golden Gate Institute/ Kinmon Gakuen," in Japanese is located to the east of the entrance, which is characterized by a pair of six-lite wooden entry doors painted in light blue. The primary façade also contains a gate surround constructed with stucco at the ground level and a balcony at the second level.



Primary (north) façade, view south.

The rear (south) facade displays horizontal wood siding, a variety of window styles and materials, including aluminum and wood, a metal fire escape, and a light well. The east façade is clad in stucco and features terra cotta steps, a metal railing, a ramp, and pavement at the ground level. The west façade contains horizontal wood siding, wood and aluminum windows, and a skylight.



Rear (south) façade, view north.



Rear yard, view northeast.

Interior

The primary entrance to The Kinmon Gakuen Building is located at the north end the building along Bush Street. The raised entry porch leads to the second floor, providing access to the centralized main entrance. The interior plan of the second (main) and third floors features double-loaded corridors of offices, classrooms, and restrooms. Each floor contains three classrooms, two on the east side of the building, and one on the southwest corner of the building. The third floor has an additional classroom at the north of the building, facing Bush Street. The classroom has a metal balcony that opens toward Bush Street and looks over the terrace below. Staircases at the northwest, northeast and southeast corners of the building provide access to the other floors. Throughout the second and third floors are notable character defining features including wooden floors, crown molding and wainscoting in corridors, wood paneled classroom doors with multi-lite upper panel and transoms, dogleg closed string wooden stains, and a light well with hipped roof and skylights.



Interior classroom of The Kinmon Gakuen Building.

The ground floor is occupied completely by a multipurpose auditorium. A long stage is located at the north wall, with a storage room to its west. To its east is a small restroom and backstage area that also attaches to a boiler room on the northeast corner of the ground floor. At the south portion of the ground floor is a kitchen, restroom, and a small closet. Above the kitchen and accessible by stairs is a mezzanine containing a separate projection room and office.

The character defining features of the auditorium include the volume of assembly space, stage, wooden floors, vertical plank wainscoting, engaged pilasters, ceiling beams and brackets, and crown molding.

The basement, which is only accessible from the rear of the building, contains two restrooms and a closet. The rest of the area is a partial crawlspace.



Auditorium, view north.



Auditorium, view west.

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

The subject property is located within the heart of San Francisco's Japantown neighborhood, which is bounded by Fillmore Street to the west, California Street to the north, Octavia Street to the east, and Geary Boulevard to the south. Located within the part of San Francisco known as the Western Addition, Japantown was a primary ethnic enclave for Japanese and Japanese Americans since the beginning of the 20th century, specifically post-1906 into the mid-1920s. While the Japanese population has declined since then, the area

still contains the majority of the city's Japanese-based community and cultural organizations and hosts Japanese cultural events such as the annual Cherry Blossom Festival and Nihonmachi Street Fair.

The subject block displays a mix of residential, commercial and institutional uses. In addition to Kinmon Gakuen, the subject block is home to other Japantown community assets such as the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (1840 Sutter), Nihonmachi Little Friends Day Care Center (1830 Sutter), and Kimonchi Senior Citizen Center (1840 Sutter).

The subject block has a variety of residential building typologies that were constructed during different time periods. The range of residences includes single-family residential Victorian homes, Edwardian Flats, midcentury apartment dwellings, and a multi-story hotel. Some buildings, including the Japanese Cultural and Community Center, have incorporated traditional Japanese architecture into their style.

On Bush Street one block to the west of the subject property is the Bush Street Cottage Row Historic District. The Article 10 historic district is significant for its intact group of architecturally consistent Italianate and Stick residential buildings constructed between 1870 and 1885. Before World War II, Cottage Row was occupied completely by Japanese-Americans, lending to the nickname of "Japan Street."



View of Bush Street Across from Kinmon Gakuen.



Bush Street Cottage Row Historic District.

CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPANT HISTORY

There are no permits on file for the original construction of any property at 2031 Bush Street. The first permit filed was for an alteration submitted by its owner, H.G. Richards, in 1911, suggesting that an earlier building existed on the site prior to the construction of The Kinmon Gakuen Building, which was completed in 1926.

After years of fundraising, The Kinmon Gakuen Foundation purchased the parcel on April 17, 1925 to house a new building for its Japanese language and culture school, Kinmon Gakuen ("Golden Gate Institute"), which had operated in another location since 1911. The new building would be purpose-built for the growing school. The foundation hired Bay Area architect, William C. Hays, to design the new building plans for 2031 Bush Street. The price of the land was \$24,000.00 and the cost of the building and fixtures was \$46,545.50, making the cumulative cost of the project \$70,545.50. The foundation received a \$44,500.00 loan from the Anglo California Bank for the project. The ground-breaking ceremony for the new building was held on November 29, 1925. Construction was completed in 1926 and a dedication ceremony was held on April 26, 1926 with classes commencing soon after. Over one thousand people attended the school within its first year of operation in the new building.

In 1940, Kinmon Gakuen received a building permit to construct a moving picture booth for the school auditorium. Films that were displayed within the school provided the Japanese American community with an important gathering space.

The building remained unaltered for nearly 30 years until 1977, when the Nihonmachi Little Friends, a bilingual Japanese child care center, moved into the auditorium of The Kinmon Gakuen Building. When Nihonmachi Little Friends moved in to 2031 Bush Street, new restrooms, a kitchen, and an office were installed. In 1981, a new non-bearing partition wall was erected over the existing low partition, a door was installed along with two new drinking fountains. In 1987, aluminum-sash windows were installed within existing openings. In 1990, more aluminum windows replaced originals in the classrooms. Additional upkeep took place during this time, including the removal of tile from the stairway and landing (1992), repair of the deck and stairway, tile replacement, and water damage repair (1997).

Since its construction in 1926, 2031 Bush Street has housed many institutions that have been central to the Japanese American community in San Francisco. In addition to Kinmon Gakuen and Nihonmachi Little Friends, the building also housed an important Black community organization during the World War II period when U.S. citizens and non-citizen residents of Japanese descent were forced to evacuate and were incarcerated by the U.S. military in war camps throughout the country. From 1942-1952, 2031 Bush Street served as the Booker T. Washington Community Center for the growing African American population in the Western Addition. The property provided a space for much needed community services and a meeting space for community organizing.

When Kinmon Gakuen reopened in 1952 following Japanese internment, the organization continued to teach Japanese language and culture, and provided space for other community groups like Nihonmachi Little Friends, which leased a portion of the space until 2018.

HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Japanese Immigration to the United States, 1869-1924

The first known Japanese to have arrived in the United States came to California in 1869, settling in the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony in El Dorado County. The number of Japanese in the United States remained small for at least a decade, due primarily to Japan's policy against emigration from 1868 until 1885. Aside from a small number of Japanese nationals who managed to skirt the law, the majority of Japanese who did live in the United States prior to 1885 were students.¹

The first major wave of Japanese migration to the United States began in 1885, following the lift of Japan's ban on emigration. From 1885 to 1907, thousands of Japanese laborers went to Hawaii to work on American-owned sugar and pineapple plantations.² While Japanese laborers first arrived in Hawaii, many later migrated east to the U.S. mainland by way of California. By 1890, nearly half of the 2,038 Japanese people living in the United States resided in the state. During this first wave of migration from Japan, most newcomers were male laborers who intended to work for a few years to acquire wealth that they would bring home to their families back in Japan. Others were male students who came to the United States to receive a higher education, as Japan eased its emigration restrictions during the 1880s to encourage its young men to attend American universities. Those who traveled to the United States were eager to escape political and social limitations that existed in Japan during this time.

The second identified wave of Japanese migration to the United States occurred from 1908 to 1924. During this period the United States and Japan entered into an informal contract known as the "Gentleman's Agreement of 1907," in which the United States agreed to refrain from imposing restrictions on immigration and Japan agreed to prevent further emigration of its citizens to the United States. Although the xenophobic intent behind the Gentlemen's Agreement was to limit the Japanese population in the United States, the policy had the opposite result. The Japanese government stopped issuing passports to male laborers coming to the United States, but parents, wives and children were allowed to emigrate.³ It was common for entire families to begin establishing permanent homes in California. The number of Japanese women arriving in the United States increased during this time as well, through arranged marriages that led to further population growth as these couples had children.

Anti-Asian sentiment continued to grow, and the U.S. Congress enacted the Immigration Act of 1917, banning immigration from most of East Asia as defined in the "Asiatic Barred Zone." Due to the existence of the Gentlemen's Agreement, however, Japan was not included in the barred zone. That all changed in 1924 with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924, which in effect barred Japanese nationals from entering the United States.

These series of immigration laws and policies resulted in the formation of clearly defined generational categories of Japanese immigrant and native-born population groups in the United States, a phenomenon that is highly unique to the country's early Japanese communities. The first generation of Japanese to migrate to the United States, generally those who arrived before 1924, are referred to as the *Issei*, while the second generation who were born in the U.S. are referred to as the *Nisei*.

¹ California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Historic Preservation, *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California*, 1988. p.121

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Settlement of Japanese Americans in San Francisco in the Twentieth Century

San Francisco served as a primary port of entry from the East and by 1906, San Francisco had the largest Japanese population in the United States, with the exception of Hawaii. From 1910 to 1940, immigrants from Asia arrived in San Francisco at the U.S. Immigration Station on Angel Island, which was established primarily to enforce restrictions against Chinese immigration put in place through the Chinese Exclusion Act. Due to the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907, most Japanese people arriving at Angel Island before 1924 were admitted into the country within a couple of days, compared to new arrivals from other Asian countries who suffered longer waiting periods and higher rates of deportation.⁴

The first Japanese immigrants in San Francisco settled in Chinatown, where they along with the Chinese were marginalized and exploited for cheap labor. Chinatown was one of the only neighborhoods where these early Japanese migrants were permitted to live and work. Although little documentation exists about their occupations, it assumed that they worked as general laborers, on the railroads or performing various domestic service tasks. As soon as Japanese Americans began to settle in San Francisco, a large concentration of social, economic and political organizations that catered to *Iessi* were established. In San Francisco, Japanese Americans services and businesses catered mostly to other Japanese immigrants. Boarding houses, restaurants, barbershops, bathhouses, gambling houses and pool halls were established within the community. Additionally, many community organizations including churches, political organizations and Japanese-language schools were established and became community anchors that provided Japanese Americans with "religious sustenance and a social life."⁵

By the turn of the 20th century, Japanese Americans began to move across town to the South of Market and established residences and local businesses there as well.⁶ Others left the city altogether, lured to outlying areas with jobs in the agricultural industry.

Emergence of Japantown as an Ethnic Enclave in the Post 1906-Disaster Period

Japantown, located in San Francisco's Western Addition neighborhood, did not emerge as a Japanese enclave until the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fire. The catastrophe had demolished both Chinatown and South of Market, where most Japanese in the city lived, leaving them displaced from their residences. In addition to the destruction caused by the fire and earthquake, South of Market was rebuilt primarily as a high-density commercial and industrial area, further displacing many of the poor and working class immigrant communities and people of color who had historically resided there. Japanese Americans, along with many of San Francisco's minority groups who had been displaced during the disaster, settled in the Western Addition, which was still largely intact.

The Western Addition neighborhood was mostly built out by 1807 and consisted mostly of single-family Victorian residences. Many of the homes in the Western Addition were built by The Real Estate Associates and were based on pattern books and used mass production techniques. During the late 19th century, the Western Addition was an upper-middle class professional neighborhood, home to a mix of European immigrants, primarily German and Jewish. By the end of the 1870s the Western Addition had the highest Jewish population of any urban area outside of New York City.⁷ Initially, the

⁴ California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Historic Preservation, *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California*, 1988. p.112.

⁵ California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Historic Preservation, *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California*, 1988. p.118.

⁶ Graves, Donna and Page & Turnbull. *Japantown Historic Context Statement*. San Francisco: Page & Turnbull, 2011. p. 28.

⁷ Graves, Donna and Page & Turnbull. *Japantown Historic Context Statement*. San Francisco: Page & Turnbull, 2011. p. 13.

Western Addition provided temporary refuge to the ethnic communities that were displaced from the 1906 disaster. In addition to Japanese, many other ethnic groups including African Americans, Mexican Americans, Filipinos, and Koreans also settled and made a life in the Western Addition. A number of the pre-disaster buildings were subdivided into flats to account for the housing shortage and increased demand for housing.

By 1910, just four years after the 1906 earthquake and fire, the area was home to more than 50 Japanese-owned commercial establishments and nearly 5,000 Japanese residents.⁸ Japanese restaurants, laundries, art stores, and shoe stores catered to Japanese clientele. Social, cultural, religious, and educational organizations emerged as well. Local residents called the neighborhood, *Nihonjin machi*, which in Japanese means, “Japanese people’s town.” The neighborhood would later become broadly recognized throughout San Francisco as Japantown, with its boundaries generally encompassing the areas between Laguna and Webster streets to the east and west, and Geary and Bush streets to the north and south. *Nihonjin machi*, or Japantown, became the first and oldest urban community of its kind in the continental United States. In terms of size, it was second only to Little Tokyo in Los Angeles.

Japanese Exclusion and Restriction

The long history of discrimination and exclusion of Japanese Americans in the United States dates to the 19th century when Japanese immigrants first arrived in the United States and were viewed exclusively as a source of temporary labor, easy to exploit and manipulate for the benefit of White Americans. As the Japanese population continued to grow, concerns amongst Whites mounted, as they saw Japanese people as “unassimilable and potentially capable of overrunning the state.”⁹ Racially charged attacks against Japanese Americans also proliferated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The riots in Vacaville (1890), Riverside (1896), and Redland (1898) are just a few of the documented acts of violence that targeted Japanese Americans alongside instances of institutionalized racism and discrimination.¹⁰

Around the turn of the 20th century, American hostility towards Japanese increased with the victory of Japan in the 1905 Russo-Japanese War.¹¹ The Japanese military’s strength was seen as a threat to the United States, while people of Japanese descent living in the United States were seen as an economic threat to White Americans. Locally, anti-Japanese sentiment was widespread throughout the city during this time and anti-Japanese propaganda proliferated through local news sources. The *San Francisco Chronicle* adopted an anti-Japanese campaign, with one article reading:

The Japanese are far more dangerous to us than the Chinese... We may say that the Japanese is enlightened, and, this being true, his education prompts him to adopt American ways, and thus, with his cheap labor, digs at the foundation upon which rests the welfare of our people. Where a Chinese will work upon a farm at starvation wages, a Japanese has the ability to acquire property itself.¹²

The Asiatic Exclusion League was formed in San Francisco in 1905 with the goal of excluding Japanese and Koreans from the United States. While it eventually expanded into a national organization, one of

⁸ Ibid, p. 28.

⁹ California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Historic Preservation, *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California*, 1988. P 121.

¹⁰ History of the Golden Gate Institute, *100th Anniversary: Golden Gate Institute Japanese Language and Cultural School 1911-2011*. 2011. p.11.

¹¹ Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York: The Free Press, 1998) 1, 51-52.

¹² Leffingwell, E.C. “San Francisco’s Mayor Wants Exclusion Act to Bar the Japs” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 1, 1905.

its first actions was successfully lobbying the San Francisco Board of Education to ban Japanese and Korean students from attending San Francisco Public Schools. Instead, Japanese and Korean students were forced to attend the Chinese segregated Oriental School in 1906. Chinese students had already been forced to attend separate schools for nearly five decades. The California legislature continued to consider laws aimed to restrict the rights of Japanese Americans on a yearly basis.¹³

BROWN MEN ARE MOST DANGEROUS

TO those who have not forgotten the nature and extent of the Chinese invasion, when it threatened to obliterate Caucasian standards of living and foist an Asiatic civilization upon California, no more alarming statement can be made than the fact that the Japanese is taking the place of the Chinese wherever the two races are brought into competition with each other. If the Chinese, whose name is a synonym of all that goes to the making of a hard bargain, cannot keep up in the sordid struggle for Asiatic existence with his half-dwarf neighbor, the extent of the brown peril which threatens us is apparent.

As will be seen by the following article, the witnesses examined by the Industrial Commission were unanimous in saying that Japanese immigration is more dangerous in every way to the American commonwealth than the immigration of the Chinese.

Why, then, should any patriotic citizen be lukewarm in his protest against the far more dangerous serfs from the empire of the Mikado?

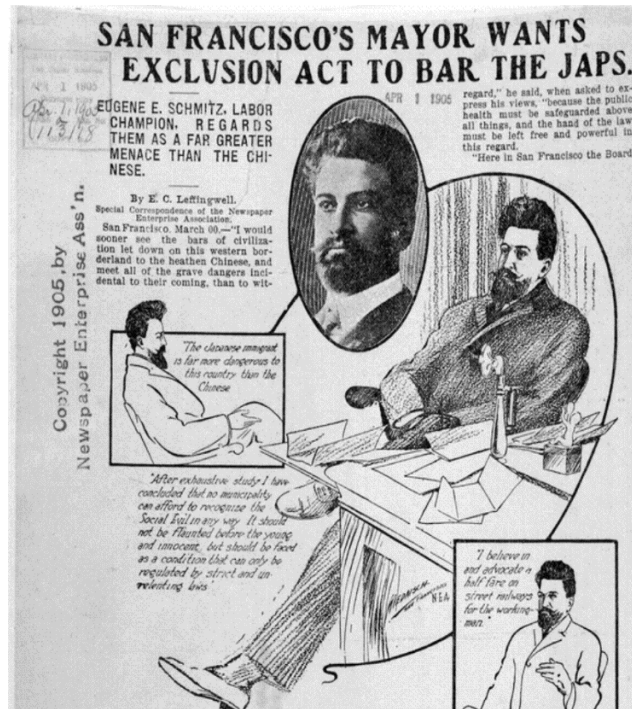
Threatened Peaceful Invasion Is Worse Than War

Densho Digital Repository

In 1922, the Supreme Court case of *Takao Ozawa v. United States* determined that Japanese were neither white nor black, [they] were classified as ‘aliens ineligible for citizenship,’ without the right of naturalization.” Although the 14th amendment granted African Americans full citizenship in 1868, Japanese Americans did not receive the same status and faced decades of social purgatory, where they were subject to many forms of discrimination, such as laws preventing Japanese immigrants from applying for naturalization and limiting the ability of Japanese Americans to own and lease land.. The Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the Asian Exclusion Act, was signed into law by President Calvin Coolidge and completely bared immigrants from Asia from entering the United States.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Office of the Historian, “The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act) Accessed January 22, 2019.



Densho Digital Repository

Japanese Language Schools in the United States

During and after the second wave of Japanese immigration, there was a demand for services that pertained specifically to Nisei, the second-generation of Japanese-descent people in the United States. Japanese language schools were particularly valued as an important tool for passing knowledge of the Japanese language and culture to Nisei children. The first Japanese language schools began to appear in the United States in 1902, many connected to churches as supplementary to their spiritual education.¹⁵

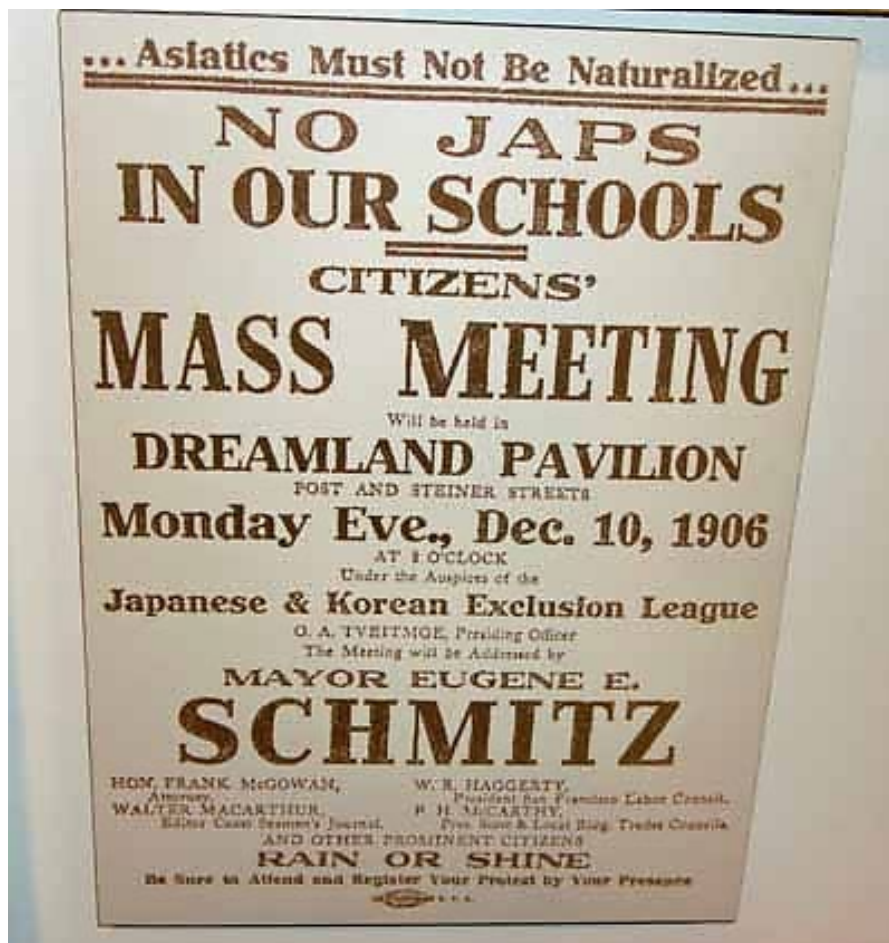
Between 1912 and 1922 more than 40 Japanese Language schools opened in California alone. Yet, as they grew in popularity, discrimination continued. In 1923, for example, a law passed prohibiting students from attending foreign language schools unless they had completed four years of public school first. Such rampant discriminatory policies were paused in 1927 when the Supreme Court ruled in favor of banning all controls on foreign language teachers and Japanese language schools subsequently reached their peak, with 248 language schools in the United States, as a result.¹⁶ An increasing Japanese population in the United States created a demand for Japanese language and culturally-based community services and Japanese American organizations were very active in promoting educational opportunities to Nisei. Influences from Japan also resulted in increased interest in Japanese language schools. In 1911, influential Japanese education scholar, Dr. Ianzo Nitobe, came to the United States to visit various universities and promote his education philosophy to Japanese Americans.

Still, the history of Japanese language schools is closely tied to the history of discrimination against Japanese Americans in the U.S. public education system. The first ban on Japanese Americans from

¹⁵ History of the Golden Gate Institute, *100th Anniversary: Golden Gate Institute Japanese Language and Cultural School 1911-2011*. 2011. p. 9.

¹⁶ Desnno. "Evacuation or Exclusion? Japanese Americans Exiled," *Discover Nikkei Japanese Migrants and Their Descendants*.

attending public schools was passed in San Francisco on October 11, 1906.¹⁷ Although the policy was unconstitutional and in direct violation of a treaty between Japan and the United States, San Francisco refused to reconsider the school ban. The same year, the first two Japanese language schools constructed in San Francisco were destroyed in the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. As the schools were rebuilt, they were strategic in adding non-Japanese curricula and hiring Anglo-American teachers to include the criteria that students would have access to in public schools. In 1907, the segregation ban was repealed in exchange for Japan agreeing to prohibit Japanese coming to the mainland from Hawaii.¹⁸



Flyer for a mass meeting called by the Japanese & Korean Exclusion League in San Francisco
Densho Digital Repository

¹⁷ Kennedy, Robert C. "On This Day" New York Times Archives.

¹⁸ History of the Golden Gate Institute, 100th Anniversary: Golden Gate Institute Japanese Language and Cultural School 1911-2011. 2011. p. 10.

Kinmon Gakuen/The Golden Gate Institute

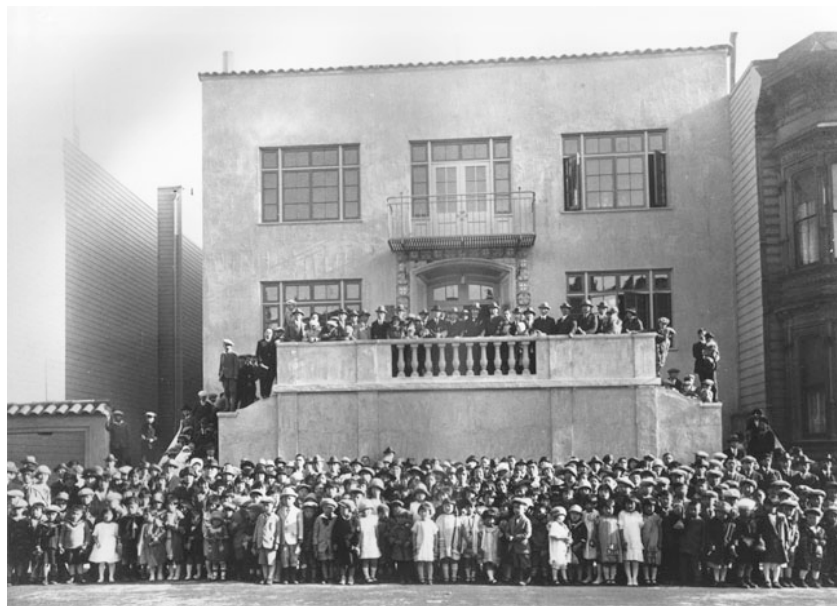
Kinmon Gakuen was founded as a Japanese language school on May 2, 1910 in San Francisco's Japantown neighborhood. A core group of activists from the Japanese American Association gathered to establish an organization that would support educational opportunities for their children. In 1911, Kinmon Gakuen rented 2301 Bush Street (not extant) for the school's first location. The school was directed by Mr. Masayoshi Tamata, who was recommended for the position by Dr. Inazo Nitobe, who in addition to being a notable Japanese educational leader, was a significant figure in Japan-United States relations.

In 1918, a group of Japanese American citizen advocates met with the Japanese Consulate to make plans for a permanent building for Kinmon Gakuen. In 1924, Kinmon Gakuen became legally recognized as a foundation by the State of California. Kinmon Gakuen is one of four community facilities in Japantown that was created through the organization and fundraising of residents of the pre-war second-generation Japanese American community.¹⁹



Kinmon Gakuen's first home at 2301 Bush Street (not extant).
(Kinmon Gakuen archives)

In 1926, after years of planning and fundraising, the building at 2031 Bush Street was complete. The school thrived in the ensuing decades, teaching students Japanese writing skills, penmanship, speech, Japanese history, ethics, etiquette, singing (of Japanese songs), and the Japanese art of flower arrangement known as Ikebana. The period between 1926 and 1942 represented both the period of highest enrollment at Kinmon Gakuen and the peak of Japanese language school enrollment.



The Kinmon Gakuen Building at 2031 Bush Street, its second and permanent location, in 1927.
(Kinmon Gakuen)

Graves, Donna and Page & Turnbull. *Japantown Historic Context Statement*. San Francisco: Page & Turnbull, 2011. P. 39.

The fundamental goal of Nisei students was to master both Japanese and English language. Students and their parents understood the importance of mastering the Japanese language as both a way to maintain culture and heritage. However, there was also a desire and sense of urgency for Nisei students to master the English language to create a “bridge of understanding between the United States and Japan.”²⁰ English speech contests were held at the Kinmon Gakuen auditorium where Nisei students would compete against one another as masters of the English language.

Kinmon Gakuen’s building also served as a space where Japanese art and culture could be displayed and celebrated. During the 1930s, early comics or *manga* was exhibited at Kinmon Gakuen that expressed the Japanese American immigrant experience. *The Four Immigrants Manga*, written by Henry Kiyama in 1931, was displayed and celebrated at Kinmon Gakuen in 1931 as it commemorated the immigrant experience and sometimes difficult transition to life in the United States.²¹

The success of Kinmon Gakuen was recognized in Japan during the 1930s and the institute caught the eye of Japanese royalty. In 1931, The Prince and Princess Takamatsu visited classes at Kinmon Gakuen when they were on a trip to the area²² and in 1933, Kinmon Gakuen was visited by Prince and Princess Kaya. This period marked a time when the institute maintained a strong relationship with Japan.

Outbreak of World War II

Acts of violence and discrimination against Japanese Americans continued to escalate well into the 1940s as a mass “anti-Japanese hysteria” beset San Francisco. Leading up to World War II, tensions between the United States and Japan were steadily increasing and Japanese language schools, including Kinmon Gakuen, were under intense scrutiny from the United States government for their suspected involvement in “anti-American” activities and the assumption that they promoted a Japanese nationalist ideology. One of the government’s biggest fears was that language teachers were cooperating with the Japanese government and that graduates of the school would be used as correspondents in service of Japan.

Kinmon Gakuen is mentioned in the 1942 Report on Japanese Activities as a component of the Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States. During a hearing on the subject held by the U.S. House of Representatives, delegates questioned the use of “outright un-American manifestations” in Japanese language schools, which they defined as Japanese symbolism, flags, pictures of the Japanese royalty, Japanese national colors, and the singing of the Japanese national anthem.²³

Outside of Japantown, tensions between the two international powers eventually collided. Japanese Navy attacked American naval bases at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, marking the turning point when the United States officially entered World War II. Soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States began to impression Japanese “enemy aliens” based on race. Under the authority of Executive Order 9066 signed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1942, “all enemy aliens and

²⁰ Morimoto, Toyotomi. *Japanese Americans and Cultural Continuity: Maintaining Language Through Heritage* Taylor and Francis, New York, 1997. p. 146

²¹ Kiyama, Henry, *The Four Immigrants Manga*, Stone Bridge Press, 1931.

²² History of the Golden Gate Institute, *100th Anniversary: Golden Gate Institute Japanese Language and Cultural School 1911-2011*. 2011. p. 13.

²³ Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Seventy-Seventh Congress, *Report on Japanese Activities*, February 28, 1942.

all persons of Japanese ancestry” were subject to military regulation. Not only did Executive Order 9066 apply to Japanese immigrants, but also to American-born citizens of Japanese descent.²⁴

Among the first people of Japanese descent who were arrested by the FBI and detained in jails as “enemy aliens” included community leaders and others deemed a threat to democracy, which generally included prominent businessmen, Japanese clergy, and school teachers. At first, only those considered particularly dangerous were sent into jails and internment camps, however it was only a matter of time before any and every person of Japanese ancestry in the United States was detained during World War II. This affected California the hardest, where the majority of the country’s Japanese and Japanese Americans lived.

Kinmon Gakuen and Japanese American Internment

As home to San Francisco’s largest Japanese language school and as one of the central community gathering spaces in the Japantown neighborhood, 2031 Bush Street caught the attention of the U.S. military during World War II. Following the signing of Executive Order 9066, Kinmon Gakuen was forced to cease operations and its building was taken over by the United States military for use as a “processing” center where persons of Japanese descent were required to report before being detained and eventually deported to War Relocation Camps throughout remote locations in the Western United States.

As Japanese Americans reported to 2031 Bush Street, they were forced to register, providing personal information about themselves and their family, and were vaccinated as “a safeguard to public health.”²⁵ Afterwards they were placed on buses that took them to various assembly centers used as temporary detention camps. Most of the residents from Japantown were taken directly to Tanforan, a former racetrack facility in San Bruno, directly after boarding the busses at Kinmon Gakuen. From there, they were taken to permanent internment camps outside of San Francisco. Most San Francisco residents were taken to an internment camp near Topaz, Utah where they were guarded behind barbed wire as guards patrolled.²⁶



Japanese Americans receiving vaccinations at The Kinmon Gakuen Building after the outbreak of World War II and the signing of Executive Order 9066.
(Kinmon Gakuen)

Life inside the prison-like camps was tenuous. Those incarcerated had no access to running water, ate meals collectively in large halls, and slept in barracks or small compartments. Every moment of waking life

²⁴Graves, Donna and Page & Turnbull. *Japantown Historic Context Statement*. San Francisco: Page & Turnbull, 2011.

²⁵ The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. “Finding Aid to War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement, 1942-1945 circa 1941-1947”

²⁶ Graves, Donna and Page & Turnbull. *Japantown Historic Context Statement*. San Francisco: Page & Turnbull, 2011. p. 39.

was monitored. Eventually people living in the camps were given onsite jobs and school was held for students so long as the education being provided aligned with “American values” and did not support Japanese language, history, or culture in any form. All school-age residents received education through the high school level. The War Relocation Authority determined the course of study and hired teachers through the State departments of education that taught Japanese students with special State standards.²⁷ About half of the educators who taught in the camps were former teachers of Japanese ancestry who had been recruited to teach while living at the relocation centers. They remained under strict scrutiny from government regulations and Japanese language was expressly forbidden in the curriculum. Japanese American students who were beginning or continuing a higher education program at an American university were allowed to leave camps through an application for indefinite leave. Japanese Americans remained in internment camps until 1945, when the war ended, and the United States released detainees and allowed for their return to the West Coast.



A bus outside of 2031 Bus Street, taking Japanese Americans to relocation centers.
(The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Photograph by Doretha Lange)

²⁷ War Relocation Authority, *Relocation of Japanese Americans*. Washington, D.C., 1943

Growing African American Population in the Western Addition

African Americans had settled in the Western Addition in significant numbers beginning in the early twentieth century after the 1906 earthquake and fire. The Black population coalesced around this area and by the 1920s, nearly fifty percent of the city's African American population lived in the Western Addition.²⁸ The neighborhood known as "the Fillmore," located within the larger Western Addition, became the residential, cultural, and economic center of the San Francisco's Black community.

During the outbreak of World War II, San Francisco became a part of the largest shipbuilding complex in the world. The demand for labor to support the shipyard operation recruited tens of thousands of workers to the Bay Area. Many of the workers that arrived in San Francisco were African Americans from the American South. Many African Americans settled in existing enclaves in Oakland, Richmond, and Sausalito. In San Francisco, workers settled in the Fillmore and in the naval housing across from the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard.

Between 1940 and 1945, the African American population in San Francisco increased by 797 percent.²⁹ The increased growth of the African American population drastically changed the entire city's demographic composition. As the Japanese American community was exiled from the city during World War II, African Americans became the largest racial or ethnic minority group in San Francisco. Due to the extreme influx of newcomers to San Francisco during the war period, the city faced a wartime housing shortage. Before World War II, African Americans found it easier to locate housing in areas where racial covenants and deed restrictions were not in place, however, as the population exponentially in such a short amount of time, it became much more difficult for anyone, but especially African Americans, to secure housing in San Francisco.

In 1942, when Executive Order 9066 authorized the movement of all people of Japanese ancestry into internment camps, African Americans began to occupy the housing stock in Japantown that had previously been occupied by the Japanese American community.³⁰ Housing was still limited, however, and living conditions were generally poor. By 1943, "approximately 9,000 African Americans were crowded into a neighborhood that had housed fewer than 5,000 Japanese Americans."³¹ Multiple families were forced to live in flats, sometimes 15 people resided in a room with only one window.³² Racial covenants and prejudice compounded with a citywide housing shortage resulted in African Americans isolation to only a few areas of the city, namely the Western Addition and Hunter's Point.

Booker T. Washington Community Service Center

The Booker T. Washington Community Service Center was formed in 1919 in response to the lack of access for African Americans to recreational and social services that White San Franciscans enjoyed and was founded by women organizing for increased social services for Black families and youth.³³ The center's physical location changed several times throughout its history. In 1920, it operated in the basement of a building on Geary Boulevard and as demand for services grew, the center purchased property at 1433 Divisadero Street. By 1942, it moved into the Kinmon Gakuen Building at 2031 Bush

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Tim Kelley Consulting, The Alfred Williams Consultancy, VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting, *San Francisco African American Citywide Historic Context Statement 1579-2014*. San Francisco: Tim Kelley Consulting, The Alfred Williams Consultancy, VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting, 2015. p. 80.

³⁰ Ibid p. 82.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. p. 83

³³ Graves, Donna and Page & Turnbull. *Japantown Historic Context Statement*. San Francisco: Page & Turnbull, 2011. p. 19.

Street after the Japanese language and culture school was forced to close during Japanese Internment during World War II.

During the wartime period, the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center evolved within the context and in response to the needs of San Francisco's Black community. The increasing population and urgent issues surrounding housing, health, and living conditions influenced the direction of the organization well into the 1940s. The center served as a space for the African American community to meet and organize surrounding these and other issues. It also created a platform from which Black community leaders and constituents could voice their concerns to elected officials and city officials. As just one example, a presentation was given at the center to representatives of the San Francisco Housing Authority regarding the low-quality of housing in the Fillmore.³⁴

Robert B. Flippin was the executive director of the Booker T. Washington Community Center when it was located at 2031 Bush Street. A community activist involved in many Black community and civic institutions, Flippin served as the treasurer of the San Francisco branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), sponsored the first alcoholics anonymous program in correctional facilities in the nation, and served as a local reporter to the Associated Negro Press, and to the "In the Districts" Sunday section of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which catered to the city's African American community.

One of Flippin's most notable achievements was his role in advocating for improved housing conditions in the Western Addition during the 1940s. In 1943, Flippin was appointed to the San Francisco Housing Authority to help manage the Westside Courts project, which was an integrated public housing project in the Western Addition. Flippin was appointed with the consent of the mayor, the housing authority commissioners, and the U.S. Housing Authority, making it one of the most prominent political appointments of an African American in San Francisco up until that point.

In addition to community organizing around housing and living conditions, the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center was as a space that promoted the political, educational, social and economic advancement of African Americans. The NAACP, for example, often used the building as a venue for its public meetings and officer elections.³⁵



"New Negro Red Cross Center"
(*San Francisco Chronicle*)

³⁴ "S.F. Housing Officials Will Meet Today", *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 6, 1943.

³⁵ "More on the Western Addition Radio Program", *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 30, 1942

In addition to working towards large goals of advancing the livelihood of African Americans in San Francisco, the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center from its headquarters on Bush Street became a space dedicated to providing basic quality of life services to directly impact the community. On January 10, 1943 the building served as a “New Negro Red Cross Center” to provide services during the war. The center also provided public health services including Chest X-Rays given during a tuberculosis outbreak. As a youth serving agency, the center offered child development services, including a nursery school center and summer programs, and represented one of the only places where children could recreate and play outside and away from the busy streets.

Booker T. Washington Community Service Center and Japanese Americans

The 110,000 people of Japanese descent who were forced into wartime relocation centers during World War II left behind “an estimated total of approximately \$200,000,000 of real, commercial and personal property.”³⁶ Faced with no choice but to leave their homes, businesses, and personal possessions, most incarcerated Japanese people permanently lost their property and belongings during internment. In other cases, property and possessions were safeguarded by sympathetic organizations. The Booker T. Washington Community Services Center was one such organization. The center not only cared for the possessions of incarcerated Japanese and Japanese Americans until the end of the war, but it also set up and operated hostels for Japanese Americans upon their return to Japantown after the war.³⁷

Many of the Japanese who returned to San Francisco’s Japantown found that home was very different from when they left. Despite the trauma and shock, families returning to Japantown were eager to rebuild their lives, businesses, and community organizations. As the entire community had been uprooted, returning to normal was no easy feat. Many churches and civic groups, including the Booker T. Washington Community Services Center, which occupied and safeguarded the Kinmon Gakuen building during the war, established hostels for many of the newly homeless Japanese Americans returning home. Finding employment was a struggle as well, as many employers racially discriminated against people of Japanese descent. Likewise, it was difficult for small businesses that had been in operation before the war to get back up and running again, as reclaiming retail space and clientele proved very challenging.

In the years following World War II, Robert B. Flippin implemented a multicultural programming component to the community center agenda. He



“Booker T. Washington Center Dedicated... for Use of All Races,” August 17, 1952. (San Francisco Chronicle)

³⁶ War Relocation Authority, *Relocation of Japanese Americans*. Washington, D.C., Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco, Accessed January 23, 2019. <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist10/relocbook.html>

³⁷ Ibid.

ensured that participants, board members, and staff were representative of the community in which the center was located. Many Japanese clubs were formed and events such as movie nights featured Japanese films brought in from Hawaii.³⁸ The relationship between the African American and Japanese American communities within San Francisco's Western Addition neighborhood was strong. Robert B. Flippin's successor, James E. Stratten, continued to create programming opportunities that worked to bring the Japanese American and African American communities together. Yori Wada, for example, was employed by the center as a social worker to help the young Japanese Americans returning to San Francisco after spending years in the camps.

In 1952, the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center transitioned into a new space at 800 Presidio Avenue, allowing for the full return of the building to Kinmon Gakuen. The Japanese community had supported the fundraising efforts for Booker T. Washington's new building on Presidio Ave, which was also a new, purpose-built community facility. "Many of the Japanese merchants made contributions and solicited contributions from their customers and friends"³⁹ and contributions were welcomed because "Booker T. was one of the places that had programs largely for Japanese-American youth."⁴⁰ When the new facility opened at 800 Presidio, it was declared that the center was "dedicated...for use of all races" to gather, hold meetings, events and programs.⁴¹

Post-World War II

At the time of the 1950 census, other ethnic groups far outnumbered the Japanese population in Japantown.⁴² Jerry Johnson, an African American resident of the Western Addition, recalls that the relationship between Blacks and the Japanese was cordial, indicating that the two groups would often overlap at different community spaces.⁴³ Within two years, however, San Francisco's Japanese American population was back to its pre-war population.⁴⁴

In 1948, three years after Japanese Americans had returned to Japantown following internment, a group of Kinmon Gakuen board members met to plan for the organization's reopening. Since the building at 2031 remained occupied by the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center, Kinmon Gakuen rented a space at 2013 Bush Street temporarily until the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center found a new permanent home.

Kinmon Gakuen returned to its historic location at 2031 Bush Street in May of 1952.⁴⁵ Although enrollment levels were not as substantial as they had been before the outbreak of World War II, 88 students still enrolled in courses upon the reopening of the building.

³⁸Bell, Shelley, *A Legacy of Victory: History of the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center 1920 to the 1970s*. p. 7

³⁹ Ibid. p. 10

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ "Booker T. Washington Center Dedicated... for Use of All Races" *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 17, 1952.

⁴² Graves, Donna and Page & Turnbull. *Japantown Historic Context Statement*. San Francisco: Page & Turnbull, 2011. p. 52

⁴³ Peace Pagoda Landmark Designation quote, July 15, 2015

⁴⁴ Graves, Donna and Page & Turnbull. *Japantown Historic Context Statement*. San Francisco: Page & Turnbull, 2011. p. 48.

⁴⁵ History of the Golden Gate Institute, *100th Anniversary: Golden Gate Institute Japanese Language and Cultural School 1911-2011*. 2011. p.16.



Crowd at Kinmon Gakuen eagerly awaiting a glimpse of the Prince and Princess, 1960.
(Kinmon Gakuen)

Throughout the 1950s, Kinmon Gakuen continued to expand its programing and reinserted itself as a vital part of the Japantown community. In 1952, the Director of Kinmon Gakuen, Mr. Suzuki began teaching an American citizenship class on the weekends, reaching an audience of about 70 students.⁴⁶ Two years later in 1954, Kinmon Gakuen language teachers expanded their services to include Adult English classes. Other non-language programing included the beginning of the popular screening events of Japanese movies. Kinmon Gakuen used the auditorium every Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings to present Japanese films. The resurgence in programing and increased enrollment after the war coincided with the Crown Prince and Princess Visitation to Kinmon Gakuen in 1960.

Epilogue

Section to be written.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Integrity

The seven aspects of integrity used by the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and Article 10 of the Planning Code are: location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association in relation to the period of significance.

Location

The building is still in its original location at the northwest corner of Buchanan Street and Webster Street.

Design

The building retains very high integrity of design with no major alterations. The original character defining features that architect William C. Hays designed remain intact.

Feeling & Association

The property retains integrity of feeling and association as it conveys its use as a school designed in the early twentieth century. In fact, it remains in use as a Japanese Language School, continuing to serve the Japantown community as it did historically.

Setting

Kinmon Gakuen retains integrity of setting, as its surrounding built environment has changed little since its construction in 1926. Located on Bush Street within the Japantown neighborhood, the subject property is situated directly between the boundaries of two districts. One street to the east of the property is the western boundary of the National Register-eligible Japantown Community and Cultural Historic District, while one block to the west of the property is the Article 10-designated Bush Street Cottage Row Historic District.

Materials & Workmanship

The property also retains integrity of materials and workmanship. Original materials that remain include its stucco siding, terra cotta tile coping, multi-lite wood windows, wooden casement windows, paneled doors, wooden wainscoting, painted plaster, and a metal and glazed paneled light well, among other features. Original details including the decorative tile surrounding and inset in the main entrance to the building and the vertically-oriented sign that reads “Golden Gate Institute/ Kinmon Gakuen” in Japanese remain located at the main entrance on the front façade.

Overall, the building retains a very high level of integrity to convey its original use and association, design, and period of construction.

ARTICLE 10 REQUIREMENTS SECTION 1004(B)

Boundaries of the Landmark Site

Encompassing all of and limited to Lot 0676 in Assessor's Block 027.

Character Defining Features

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 Landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Character-defining features include all primary *exterior* elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials identified as:

- Irregular plan set back from the front property line
- Two-story with basement massing
- Flat roof with Mission terra cotta tile coping at the cornice
- Lightly textured stucco siding
- Gated entrance with Mission terra cotta tile coping leading to the building's side yard
- Double stair with risers and treads clad in terra cotta tile separated by a concrete wall with decorative pilasters and water table
- Raised entry porch with balustrades and a terra cotta tile clad floor
- Regular fenestration pattern with multi-lite wood windows
- Segmental arched portal with decorative tile surround and inset main entrance
- Vertically-oriented red and white sign reading "Golden Gate Institute/Kinmon Gakuen" in Japanese, located west of the main entrance
- Paired six-lite paneled wood entry doors surmounted by segmentally arched four-lite transom
- Paired six-lite wooden casement windows with three-lite sidelights surmounted by a six-lite transom window flanking the entrance
- Paired six-lite wood paneled doors three-lite sidelights surmounted by a six-lite transom at the second story above main entrance
- Two sets of windows on the second floor mirroring those on the first floor
- All existing window openings and configurations on facades visible from the street (east and west facades), characterized by a mix of double-hung and jalousie multi-pane wooden windows
- On the west elevation, pathway in side yard leading to the auditorium

Character-defining *interior* features identified as:

Second and Third Floors

- Circulation pattern characterized by double-loaded corridors on second and third floors
- Wooden floors on second and third floors
- Crown molding and wainscoting in corridors
- Wood paneled classroom door with multi-lite upper panel and transoms

- Dogleg, closed string wooden stairs between basement and second floor, and between second and third floors, with railing
- Light well with hipped roof and skylights

Auditorium

- Volume of assembly space
- Stage
- Wooden floors
- Vertical plank wainscoting
- Engaged pilasters
- Ceiling beams and brackets
- Crown molding

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Historic Name: Kinmon Gakuen

Address: 2031 Bush Street

Block and Lot: 0676/067

Owner: Golden Gate Institute

Original Use: School

Current Use: School

Zoning: RM- 3- Residential- Mixed, Medium Density

PHOTOGRAPHS



Primary elevation, view south.



Front entry detail, view south.



Entry gate along north elevation that leads to side yard along the east elevation, view southwest.



East elevation, view southeast.



Rear/south elevation, view north.



Light well at west elevation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Photography

Cary and Company

1 [Planning Code - Landmark Designation – 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen
2 Building)]

3 **Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate 2031 Bush Street (aka The**
4 **Kinmon Gakuen Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027, as a**
5 **Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's**
6 **determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public**
7 **necessity, convenience and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and**
8 **findings of consistency with the General Plan and the eight priority policies of Planning**
9 **Code, Section 101.1.**

10 **NOTE:** **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
11 **Additions to Codes** are in single-underline italics Times New Roman font.
12 **Deletions to Codes** are in ~~strikethrough italics Times New Roman font~~.
13 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.
14 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
15 **Asterisks (* * * *)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code
16 subsections or parts of tables.

17 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

18 Section 1. Findings.

19 (a) CEQA and Land Use Findings.

20 (1) The Planning Department has determined that the proposed Planning Code
21 amendment is subject to a Categorical Exemption from the California Environmental Quality
22 Act (California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq., "CEQA") pursuant to Section
23 15308 of the Guidelines for Implementation of the statute for actions by regulatory agencies
24 for protection of the environment (in this case, landmark designation). Said determination is
25 on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____ and is
incorporated herein by reference. The Board of Supervisors affirms this determination.

1 (2) Pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that
2 the proposed landmark designation of 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building),
3 Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027, will serve the public necessity, convenience,
4 and welfare for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No.
5 _____, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated
6 herein by reference.

7 (3) The Board finds that the proposed landmark designation of 2031 Bush
8 Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building) is consistent with the San Francisco General Plan
9 and with Planning Code Section 101.1(b) for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation
10 Commission Resolution No. _____, recommending approval of the proposed
11 designation, which is incorporated herein by reference.

12 (b) General Findings.

13 (1) Pursuant to Section 4.135 of the Charter of the City and County of San
14 Francisco, the Historic Preservation Commission has authority "to recommend approval,
15 disapproval, or modification of landmark designations and historic district designations under
16 the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors."

17 (2) On August 17, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission added 2031
18 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building) to the Landmark Designation Work Program.

19 (3) The Designation report was prepared by Planning Department preservation
20 staff. All preparers meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards,
21 and the report was reviewed for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards
22 of Article 10 of the Planning Code.

23 (4) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of
24 _____, 2019, reviewed Department staff's analysis of the historical significance of
25

2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building) pursuant to Article 10 as part of the
Landmark Designation Case Report dated _____.

(5) On _____, 2019, the Historic Preservation Commission passed
Resolution No. _____, initiating designation of 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon
Gakuen Building) as a San Francisco Landmark pursuant to Section 1004.1 of the Planning
Code. Such resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No.
_____ and is incorporated herein by reference.

(6) On _____, after holding a public hearing on the proposed
designation and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning
Department staff and the Landmark Designation Case Report, the Historic Preservation
Commission recommended approval of the proposed landmark designation of 2031 Bush
Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building), by Resolution No. _____. Such resolution is
on file with the Clerk of the Board in File No. _____.

(7) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that 2031 Bush Street (aka The
Kinmon Gakuen Building) has a special character and special historical, architectural, and
aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will further the purposes
of and conform to the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code.

Section 2. Designation.

Pursuant to Section 1004 of the Planning Code, 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon
Gakuen Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027, is hereby designated as a
San Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code.

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1 Section 3. Required Data.

2 (a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the City
3 parcel located at 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building), Assessor's Parcel
4 Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027, in San Francisco's Japantown neighborhood.

5 (b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and
6 shown in the Landmark Designation Case Report and other supporting materials contained in
7 Planning Department Case Docket No. 2017-012291DES. In brief, 2031 Bush Street (aka The
8 Kinmon Gakuen Building) is eligible for local designation as it is associated with events that
9 have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, and embodies
10 distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. Specifically, designation
11 of The Kinmon Gakuen Building is proper given its association with the social, cultural, and
12 educational enrichment of Japanese Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century
13 as the home of Japanese language and culture school, Kinmon Gakuen. The building is also
14 associated with the evacuation, relocation, and incarceration of U.S. citizens and residents of
15 Japanese descent during World War II. Following President Franklin D. Roosevelt's signing of
16 Executive Order No. 9066, Kinmon Gakuen was forced to cease operations and its building
17 was taken over by the federal government for use as a processing center where citizens and
18 non-citizens of Japanese ancestry were required to report before they were incarcerated and
19 relocated to concentration camps across the United States. 2031 Bush Street is also
20 significant for its association with community organizing and activism among African
21 Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century, as home of the Booker T.
22 Washington Community Center from 1942 to 1952. The center provided African Americans,
23 especially youth, with a space for social, educational, and recreational opportunities. During
24 Japanese internment, the African American community stewarded many of the properties that
25 had been vacated by Japanese Americans in Japantown, including The Kinmon Gakuen

1 Building, and supported Japanese Americans upon their return to the neighborhood after the
2 war. Designation of 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building) is also proper as it
3 is an excellent example of an educational building designed in the Mediterranean Revival
4 architectural style in San Francisco.

5 (c) The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined
6 necessary, are those generally shown in photographs and described in the Landmark
7 Designation Case Report, which can be found in Planning Department Docket No. 2017-
8 012291DES, and which are incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully set
9 forth. Specifically, the following features shall be preserved or replaced in kind:

10 (1) All exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, rooflines, architectural
11 ornament and materials of 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building) identified as:

- 12 (A) Irregular plan set back from the front property line;
- 13 (B) Two-story with basement massing;
- 14 (C) Flat roof with Mission terra cotta tile coping at the cornice;
- 15 (D) Lightly textured stucco siding;
- 16 (E) Gated entrance with Mission terra cotta tile coping leading to the
17 building's side yard;
- 18 (F) Double stair with risers and treads clad in terra cotta tile separated by
19 a concrete wall with decorative pilasters and water table;
- 20 (G) Raised entry porch with balustrades and a terra cotta tile clad floor;
- 21 (H) Metal balcony on the front (north) elevation;
- 22 (I) Regular fenestration pattern with multi-lite wood windows;
- 23 (J) Segmental arched portal with decorative tile surround and inset main
24 entrance;
- 25

1 (K) Vertically-oriented red and white sign reading "Golden Gate
2 Institute/Kinmon Gakuen" in Japanese, located east of the main entrance;

3 (L) Paired six-lite paneled wood entry doors surmounted by segmentally
4 arched four-lite transom;

5 (M) Paired six-lite wooden casement windows with three-lite sidelights
6 surmounted by a six-lite transom window flanking the entrance;

7 (N) Paired six-lite wood paneled doors with three-lite sidelights
8 surmounted by a six-lite transom at the second story above main entrance;

9 (O) Two sets of windows on the second floor mirroring those on the third
10 floor; and

11 (P) On the east elevation, pathway in side yard leading to the auditorium.

12 (2) The character-defining interior features of 2031 Bush Street (aka The
13 Kinmon Gakuen Building) are those depicted in the floor plans or photos of the Landmark
14 Designation Case Report, including:

15 (A) Second and Third Floors:

16 (i) Circulation pattern characterized by double-loaded corridors on
17 second and third floors;

18 (ii) Wooden floors on second and third floors;

19 (iii) Crown molding and wainscoting in corridors on second and
20 third floors;

21 (iv) Wood paneled classroom doors with multi-lite upper panel and
22 transoms;

23 (v) Dogleg, closed string wooden stairs between basement and
24 second floor, and between second and third floors, with railing; and

25 (vi) Light well with hipped roof and skylights.

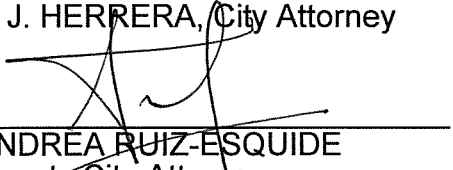
(B) Auditorium:

- (i) Volume of assembly space;
- (ii) Stage;
- (iii) Wooden floors;
- (iv) Vertical plank wainscoting;
- (v) Engaged pilasters;
- (vi) Ceiling beams and brackets; and
- (vii) Crown molding.

Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

By:


ANDREA RUIZ-ESQUIDE
Deputy City Attorney

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**GOLDEN GATE INSTITUTE
KINMON GAKUEN**
JAPANESE LANGUAGE & CULTURAL SCHOOL
SINCE 1911

July 27, 2017

Tim Frye
Historic Preservation Officer
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Frye:

I am a Board Member of Golden Gate Institute, Inc. (Kinmon Gakuen), the Japanese Language and Culture School. It is my understanding that Kinmon Gakuen, is on the list to be considered for Landmark Designation status by the City and County of San Francisco. Our board is in full support of this measure and would like to respectfully request that the historic resource evaluation report for this site be expedited on the Landmark Designation study list.

Currently, we are meeting with consultants to conduct a study on the existing condition of the building, identifying its code-related deficiencies and making recommendations for rehabilitation and future uses. We are aware of some of the historic features in the interior and exterior of the building, but having the report conducted by the City would be essential for us to use as a foundational tool to proceed.

Our request to expedite this matter comes from the fact that we have just lost a major tenant that provided the income needed to maintain the building. Therefore, we want to make sure that we can proceed with a plan as soon as possible to attract other tenants.

Your cooperation and assistance are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Richard Hashimoto
Board Member
Golden Gate Institute, Inc. (Kinmon Gakuen)

cc: John Rahaim
Andrew Wolfram
Kinmon Gakuen Board of Directors

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January 18, 2019

Historic Preservation Commission
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Japanese Community Youth Council, I would like to express our enthusiastic support for the Golden Gate Institute, Inc. (Kinmon Gakuen) and their efforts to receive historic designation.

The Kimon Gakuen school site has tremendous significance to the Japantown community. It is one of the oldest remaining vestiges of our pre-war and pre-redevelopment community. For decades, Kimon Gakuen played the vital role of preserving the Japanese language for hundreds of families in San Francisco.

The site is also significant to this community for its history as one of the World War II assembly centers where Japanese Americans in San Francisco were forced to gather prior to being imprisoned in concentration camps. Kimon Gakuen was featured in many of the historic photos taken by War Relocation Authority photographer Dorothea Lange. Her depiction of Japanese Americans lining up at the site offers a stark and important reminder of the lessons which must be preserved about this dark chapter in American history.

I also have a personal connection to the Kimon Gakuen site. After the war, my father's family relocated to San Francisco and my grandmother Tomi Osaki was hired as a teacher. She would eventually become the Principal of Kimon Gakuen and serve in the position for over 20 years.

This building has an important historic past that needs to be preserved and I urge you to support the historic designation.

Sincerely,



Jon Osaki
Executive Director