[Planning Code - Landmark Designation - 2031 Bush Street (aka the Kinmon Gakuen Building)]

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

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

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

Section 1. Findings.

(a) CEQA and Land Use Findings.

(1) The Planning Department has determined that the proposed Planning Code amendment is subject to a Categorical Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq., "CEQA") pursuant to Section 15308 of the Guidelines for Implementation of the statute for actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment (in this case, landmark designation). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 190644 and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board of Supervisors affirms this determination.

(2) Pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that the proposed landmark designation of 2031 Bush Street (aka the Kinmon Gakuen Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027, will serve the public necessity, convenience, and welfare for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 1043, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated herein by reference.

(3) The Board finds that the proposed landmark designation of the Kinmon Gakuen Building is consistent with the San Francisco General Plan and with Planning Code Section 101.1(b) for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 1043, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated herein by reference.

(b) General Findings.

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

(2) On August 17, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission added the Kinmon Gakuen Building to the Landmark Designation Work Program.

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

(4) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of February 6, 2019, reviewed Department staff's analysis of the historical significance of the Kinmon

Gakuen Building pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated February 6, 2019.

(5) On February 6, 2019, the Historic Preservation Commission passed Resolution No. 1022, initiating designation of 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. 190644 and is incorporated herein by reference.

(6) On April 3, 2019, 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 the Kinmon Gakuen Building, by Resolution No. 1043. Such resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board in File No. 190644.

(7) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that 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.

///

///

///

Section 3. Required Data.

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

(b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and shown in the Landmark Designation Case Report and other supporting materials contained in Planning Department Case Docket No. 2017-012291DES. In brief, the Kinmon Gakuen Building is eligible for local designation as it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, and embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. Specifically, designation of the Kinmon Gakuen Building is proper given 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. 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. Kinmon Gakuen Building 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 Center from 1942 to 1952. The center provided African Americans, especially youth, with a space for social, educational, and recreational opportunities. During Japanese incarceration, the African American community stewarded many of the properties that had been vacated by Japanese Americans in Japantown, including the Kinmon Gakuen Building, and supported Japanese Americans upon their return to the neighborhood after the

war. Designation of the Kinmon Gakuen Building is also proper as it is an excellent example of an educational building designed in the Mediterranean Revival architectural style in San Francisco.

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

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

(A) Irregular plan set back from the front property line;

(B) Two-story with basement massing;

(C) Flat roof with Mission terra cotta tile coping at the cornice;

(D) Lightly textured stucco siding;

(E) Gated entrance with Mission terra cotta tile coping leading to the building's side yard;

(F) Double stair with risers and treads clad in terra cotta tile separated by a concrete wall with decorative pilasters and water table;

(G) Raised entry porch with balustrades and a terra cotta tile clad floor;

(H) Metal balcony on the front (north) elevation;

(I) Regular fenestration pattern with multi-lite wood windows;

(J) Segmental arched portal with decorative tile surround and inset main entrance;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(A) Second and Third Floors:

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

(ii) Wooden floors on second and third floors;

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

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

(v) Window openings at the second floor of the interior;

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

(vii) Light well with hipped roof and skylights.

(B) Auditorium:

(vii) 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

n:\legana\as2019\1800206\01363682.docx

City and County of San Francisco
Tails
Ordinance

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

File Number: 190644 **Date Passed:** October 22, 2019

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

September 30, 2019 Land Use and Transportation Committee - RECOMMENDED

October 08, 2019 Board of Supervisors - PASSED ON FIRST READING

Ayes: 9 - Brown, Fewer, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Yee

Excused: 2 - Haney and Walton

October 22, 2019 Board of Supervisors - FINALLY PASSED

Ayes: 11 - Brown, Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

File No. 190644

I hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance was FINALLY PASSED on 10/22/2019 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

London N. Breed
Mayor

11/1/2019

Date Approved

SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 1043

HEARING DATE: APRIL 3, 2019

Case No.	2017-012291DES
Project:	2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building)
Re:	Recommendation to Board of Supervisors of Article 10 Landmark Designation
Staff Contact:	Desiree Smith (415) 575-9093 desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By:	Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822 tim.frye@sfgov.org

RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF 2031 BUSH STREET (AKA THE KINMON GAKUEN BUILDING), ASSESSOR'S PARCEL BLOCK NO. 0676, LOT NO. 027, AS LANDMARK NO. XXX

1. WHEREAS, on August 17, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission added 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0676, Lot No. 027, to the Landmark Designation Work Program; and

2. WHEREAS, Department staff who meets the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards prepared the Landmark Designation Report for 2031 Bush Street 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's historical significance per Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated February 6, 2019 and initiated landmark designation process through Resolution 1022; and

4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the 2031 Bush Street nomination is in the form prescribed by the Historic Preservation Commission and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and

5. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 2031 Bush Street is eligible for local designation as it is associated 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; and

6. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 2031 Bush Street is also eligible for local designation because it is 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; and

7. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 2031 Bush Street is further eligible for local designation due to 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 Center from 1942 to 1952; and

8. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 2031 Bush Street is further eligible for local designation as an excellent example of an educational building designed in the Mediterranean Revival architectural style in San Francisco; and

9. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 2031 Bush Street meets one of the Historic Preservation Commission's four priorities for designation which include the designation of properties with strong cultural associations; and

10. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 2031 Bush Street meets the eligibility requirements per Section 1004 of the Planning Code and warrants consideration for Article 10 landmark designation; and

11. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of exterior and interior character-defining features, as identified in the Landmark Designation Report, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the building's historical significance and retain historical integrity; and

12. WHEREAS, the proposed designation is consistent with the General Plan priority policies pursuant to Planning Code sections 101.1 and 302; and furthers Priority Policy 7, which states that historic buildings be preserved; and

13. WHEREAS, the Department has determined that landmark designation is exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical); and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends to the Board of Supervisors approval of landmark designation of 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3787, Lot No. 018 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 April 3, 2019.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Black, Johnck, Johns, Pearlman, Wolfram

NAYS: None

RECUSED: Matsuda

ABSENT: Hyland

ADOPTED: April 3, 2019

SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 1022

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2019

Case No.	2017-012291DES
Project:	2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building)
Re:	Initiation of Article 10 Landmark Designation
Staff Contact:	Desiree Smith (415) 575-9093 desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By:	Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822 tim.frye@sfgov.org

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: Black, Hyland, Johnck, Johns, Pearlman, Wolfram

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

RECUSED: Matsuda

ADOPTED: February 6, 2019

SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

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
Staff Contact:	Desiree Smith – (415) 575-9093 desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By:	Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822 tim.frye@sfgov.org

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 Statemen*t (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

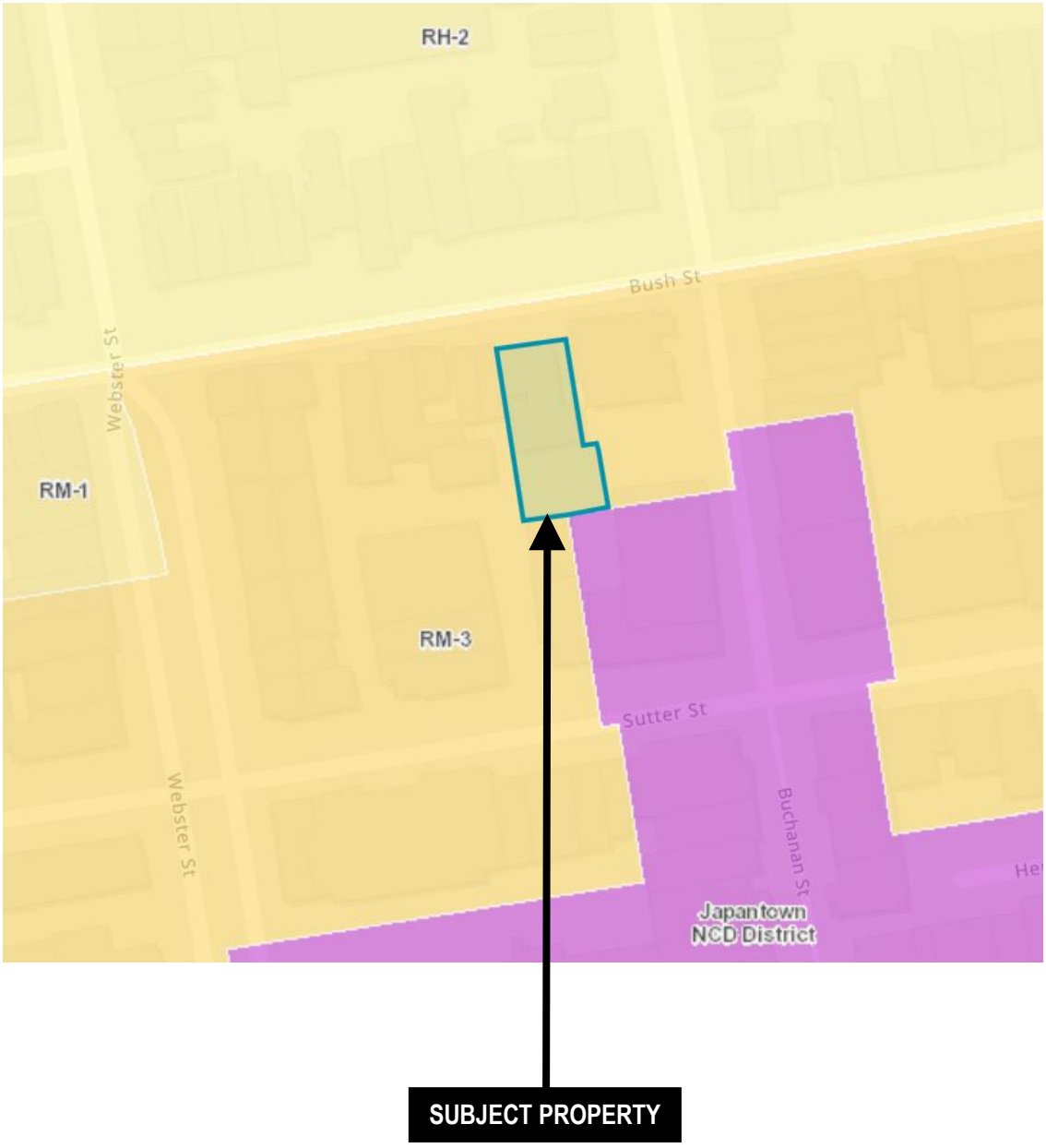
A. Exhibits
B. Draft Resolution initiating designation
C. Draft Landmark Designation Report
D. Draft Ordinance
E. Letters of Support

Parcel Map



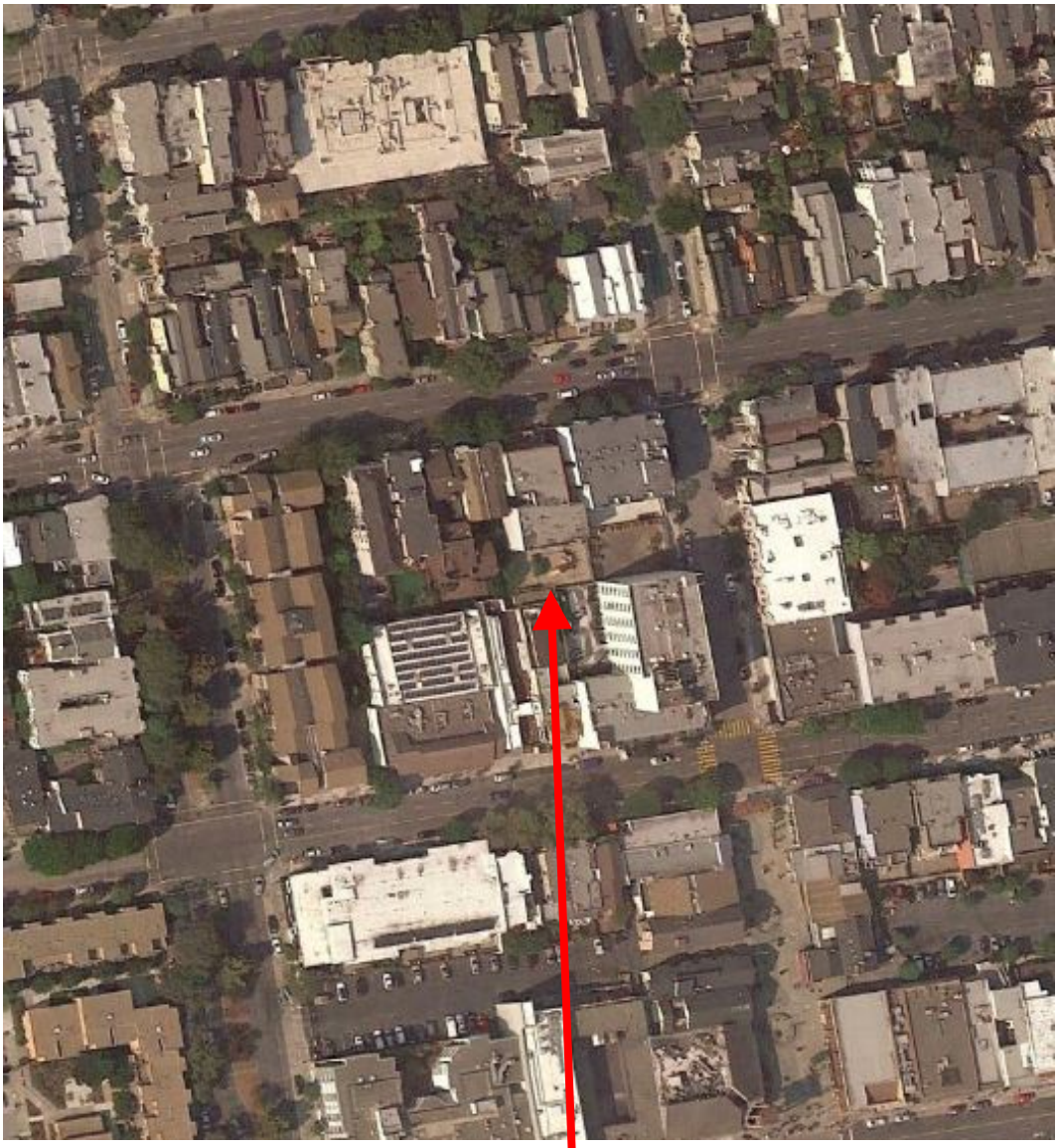
Article 10 Landmark Designation
Case Number 2017-012291DES
The Kinmon Gakuen Building
2031 Bush Street

Zoning Map



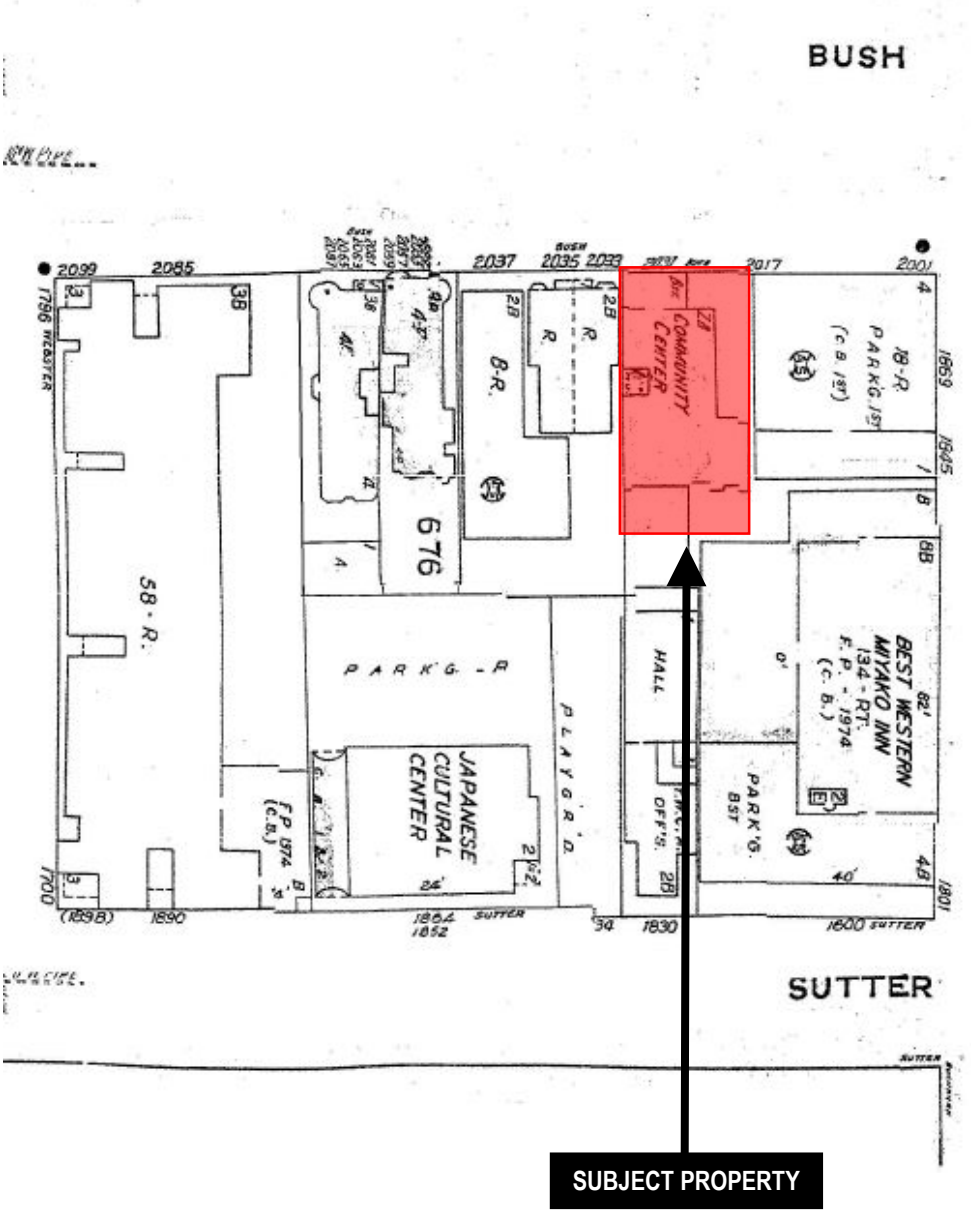
Article 10 Landmark Designation
Case Number 2017-012291DES
The Kinmon Gakuen Building
2031 Bush Street

Aerial Photo



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
Case Number 2017-012291DES
The Kinmon Gakuen Building
2031 Bush Street

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. Fyre:

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 Instiute, Inc. (Kinmon Gakuen)

cc: John Rahaim
Andrew Wolfram
Kinmon Gakuen Board of Directors

2031 Bush St, San Francisco, CA 94115 U.S.A.
Tel:(415)567-4383 E-mail: kinmonsf@hotmail.com
http://www.kinmongakuen.com

JCYC

2012 Pine Street
San Francisco, CA
94115
Tel: (415) 202-7900
Fax: (415) 921-1841
www.jcyc.org

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 it's 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.

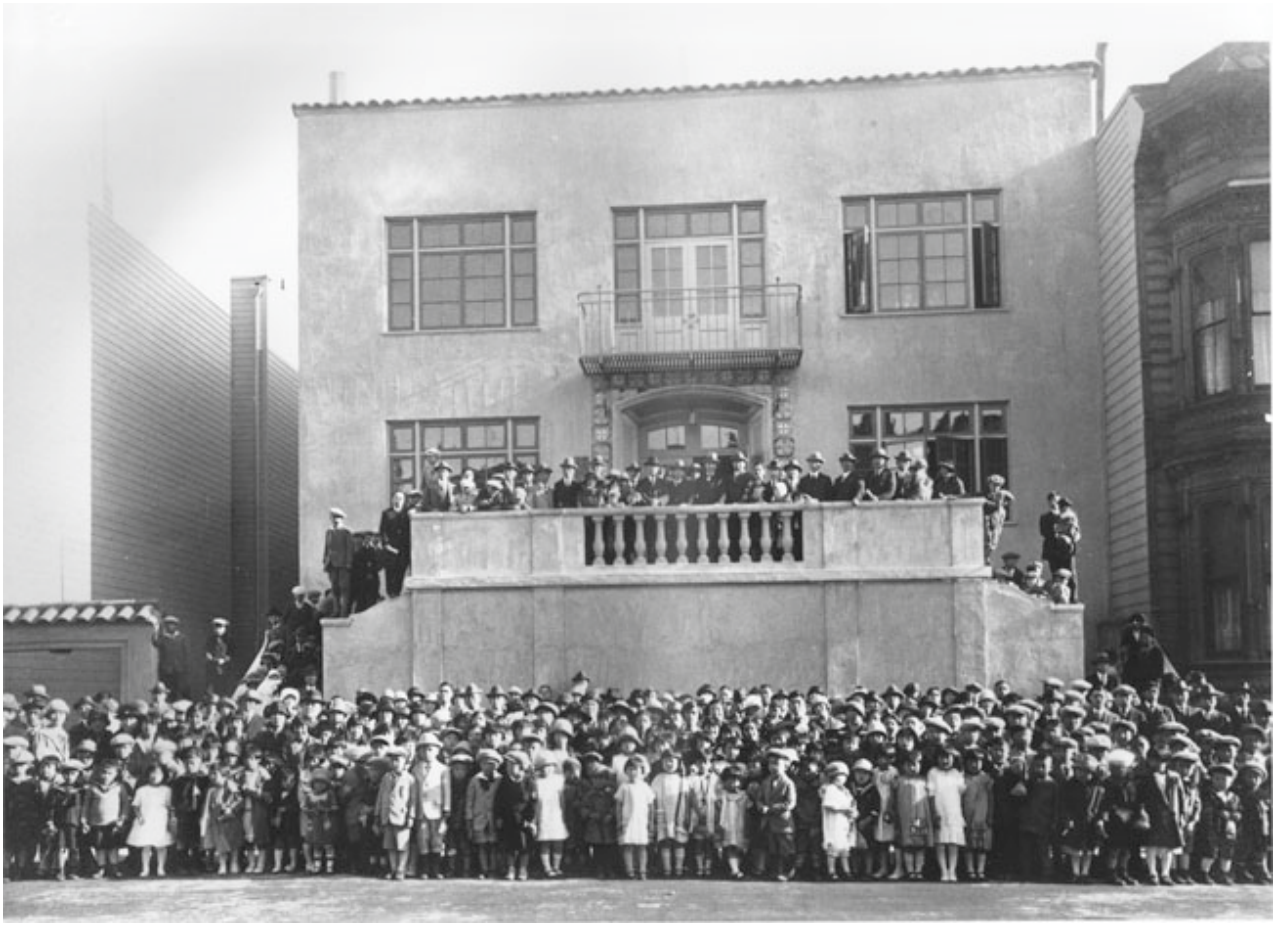
I also have a personal connection to the Kimon Gakuen site. After the war, my father's family relocated to San Francisco and my grandmother Tomi Osaki was hired as a teacher. She would eventually become the Principal of Kimon Gakuen and serve in the position for over 20 years.

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

DRAFT
LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



The Kinmon Gakuen Building
2031 Bush Street

Landmark No. 288

Initiated by the Historic Preservation Commission, February 6, 2019
Signed by Mayor London Breed, November 1, 2019

Cover: The Kinmon Gakuen Building, circa 1927 (Kinmon Gakuen)

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.

This Draft Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the initiation and designation process. 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 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 ("Golden Gate Institute"), from 1926 to the present. The organization was established in 1911, representing one of the earliest Japanese language schools established in the continental United States. Kinmon Gakuen has operated from the same site ever since, although its original building was demolished in 1925 to make room for a new, purpose-built school building constructed in 1926. It is the 1926 building that is the subject of this nomination.

The Kinmon Gakuen Building is one of four community facilities constructed in San Francisco's *Nihonjin Machi* ("Japanese People's Town") in the Western Addition that was built with funds raised by the local Japanese American community. More specifically, it was the *Issei* (the first or immigrant generation), who fundraised and built the school. Kinmon Gakuen's story is tied to the emergence of Japanese language schools in the United States, which began in Washington and California during the early twentieth century. Like other Japanese language schools, Kinmon Gakuen expanded beyond its role as a school and functioned as an important community gathering place for local *Nikkei* (a term used to describe the broader Japanese community in the United States). 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. Its building at 2031 Bush Street is perhaps one of the most prominent properties associated with Japanese American history in San Francisco.

The building is also associated with the experience of the Japanese community in San Francisco during World War II and following the signing of Executive Order No. 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942. The executive order authorized the creation of military zones and paved the way for the mass incarceration of Japanese-descent people throughout the United States, a period that lasted from 1942 to 1945. During that time, Japanese language schools came under intense scrutiny by the U.S. military who believed language schools played a role in fostering pro-Japanese nationalist agendas. Kinmon Gakuen was eventually forced to shut down. 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 being relocated to concentration camps across the country.

The period of Japanese incarceration coincided with the arrival of many African Americans to San Francisco who came to the city in search of wartime employment. Many of these new arrivals found housing opportunities in Japantown, largely due to the opening of residences that had previously been occupied by Japanese. This growing African American community in the Western Addition ended up stewarding many Japanese-owned properties, including The Kinmon Gakuen Building, where the Booker T. Washington Community Services Center operated from 1942 to 1952. The building, thus, is also significant for its association with community organizing and activism among African Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century. 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 by establishing hostels for those in need of shelter. By 1952, the center moved into its permanent home at 800 Presidio Avenue and Kinmon Gakuen once again returned to 2031 Bush Street.

Lastly, the building itself is an excellent example of an educational building designed in the Mediterranean Revival architectural style in San Francisco, a popular design aesthetic for school buildings during the 1920s and 1930s.



The Kinmon Gakuen Building, 2018.
(Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company)

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.



Detail of main entry at front (north) façade, view south.
(Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company)

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 large rear yard where a courtyard and playground allow for recreational use. The property is a wood-frame structure with two-stories with a basement, and flat roof.

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 and separated by a concrete wall with decorative pilasters and a water table. The building's main entrance is set within a segmental arched opening 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 surmounted by a transom and a metal balcony at the second level. To the east of the building, at the property line is a portal with metal gate that is clad in stucco and capped by terra cotta clay tile.



Primary (north) façade, view south.
(Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company)

The rear (south) elevation displays horizontal wood siding, a variety of window styles and materials (including aluminum and wood), a metal fire escape. A light well with skylight is located at the west elevation. 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.



Rear (south) façade, view north.



Rear yard, view northeast.

(Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company)

Interior

The primary entrance to The Kinmon Gakuen Building is located at the north end of the building along Bush Street. The raised entry porch leads to the second floor, which serves as the main floor, and provides access to the centralized main entrance. The interior plan of the second 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 end of the building that faces Bush Street. This classroom features a metal balcony that opens toward Bush Street and looks over the terrace below. 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. Staircases are located at the northwest, northeast, and southeast corners of the 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 are a kitchen, restroom, and small closet. Above the kitchen, and accessible by stairs, is a mezzanine containing a separate projection room and office.



Interior classroom of The Kinmon Gakuen Building.
(Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company)



Double loaded corridor leading to classrooms.
(Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company)

The features of the auditorium include the volume of the assembly space, a 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 serves as a partial crawlspace.



Auditorium, view north.
(Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company)



Auditorium, view west. (Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company)
(Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company)

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 larger Western Addition area of San Francisco, Japantown became an ethnic enclave for Japanese and Japanese Americans after the 1906 earthquake and fire.



View of Bush Street Across from Kinmon Gakuen.

The area is home to nearly all of the city's Japanese American community and cultural organizations and hosts Japanese cultural events including the annual Cherry Blossom Festival and Nihonmachi Street Fair.



Bush Street Cottage Row Historic District.

The subject block displays a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional properties. Kinmon Gakuen shares the block with 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 Kimochi Senior Citizen Center (1840 Sutter).

The residential building typologies on the block date to different time periods and include 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 Japanese architectural influences 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, leading to the nickname of "Japan Street."

CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPANT HISTORY



Kinmon Gakuen's first building, located on the same site as the new building (2031 Bush Street). It operated there from 1911 to 1925. (Kinmon Gakuen)

After several years of fundraising, the Kinmon Gakuen Foundation purchased the subject parcel on April 17, 1925 to house a new building for its Japanese language and culture school, which had operated in an earlier building at the same location since 1911. The new building was to be built specifically for the needs of the growing school.

The foundation hired Bay Area architect, William C. Hays, to design the new building for 2031 Bush Street. The price of the land was $24,000 and the cost of construction $46,545. In addition to funds raised by the community, the foundation received a $44,500 loan from the Anglo California Bank for the project. The groundbreaking ceremony for the new building was held on November 29, 1925 and construction was completed in 1926. A dedication ceremony was held on April 26, 1926 with classes commencing soon after.

In 1940, Kinmon Gakuen received a building permit to construct a moving picture booth for the school auditorium. The building remained unaltered for nearly 30 years until 1977 when Nihonmachi Little Friends, a bilingual Japanese childcare center, moved into the auditorium. At that time new restrooms, a kitchen, and an office were installed. In 1981, a new non-bearing partition wall was erected over the existing low kitchen partition, and in 1987 aluminum-sash windows were installed within existing openings. In 1990, more aluminum windows replaced originals in the classrooms. Additional maintenance occurred in the 1990s, including 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 several institutions that have been central to the Japanese American community in San Francisco, including Kinmon Gakuen, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), and Nihonmachi Little Friends. The building also housed an important African American community organization, the Booker T. Washington Community Services Center, during World War II when people of Japanese descent were forced to relocate from the city.

When Kinmon Gakuen reoccupied the building in 1952, the organization continued to teach Japanese language and culture to local youth and rented space to 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 arrive 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 until 1885, due primarily to Japanese policies that had prohibited emigration from the country. 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 Hawaii was their first destination, many Japanese laborers later migrated to the U.S. mainland, especially California. By 1890, nearly half of the 2,038 Japanese people living the United States resided in the state. During this first major wave of migration from Japan, most newcomers were male laborers who intended to work for only a few years and after saving some money, eventually return to Japan. Others were male students who came to the United States to receive a higher education. Japan eased its emigration restrictions during the 1880s largely to encourage its young men to attend American universities. Those who traveled to the United States were eager to escape political and social limitations back home.

The second identified wave of Japanese migration to the United States occurred from 1908 to 1924. This period witnessed fewer single men entering the country while women, including the wives or "picture brides" of Japanese laborers already living in the United States, began to migrate to the United States in large numbers for the first time. With the population growth came an increase in anti-Japanese sentiment, particularly in California and San Francisco, as described by Robert C. Kennedy of *HarpWeek*:

> The California legislature adopted a resolution urging Congress to enact stricter immigration laws, a Japanese-Korean Exclusion League was established, the *San Francisco Chronicle* began an anti-Japanese campaign in its newspaper, the San Francisco school board announced its segregation plan, labor unions organized boycotts of Japanese businesses, and prominent leaders in the city's Japanese community were physically assaulted.[3]

The most controversial of the anti-Japanese policies established during this period, and one that garnered national attention, was enacted in 1906 by the San Francisco school board, which banned Japanese and all Asian children from the city's public schools. The act sparked a diplomatic emergency between the U.S. and Japan, who took deep offense to the San Francisco policy and subsequently filed an official complaint with the U.S. State Department. To retain positive relations with Japan, an increasingly powerful world player, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt intervened by sending Commerce and Labor Secretary, Victor Metcalf, to San Francisco to convince the school board to reverse its decision. Publicly, Roosevelt derided San Francisco's school segregation policy as a "wicked absurdity" and promised to protect the rights of Japanese in the United States.

---

[1] California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Historic Preservation, *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California* (Sacramento, 1988), 121.

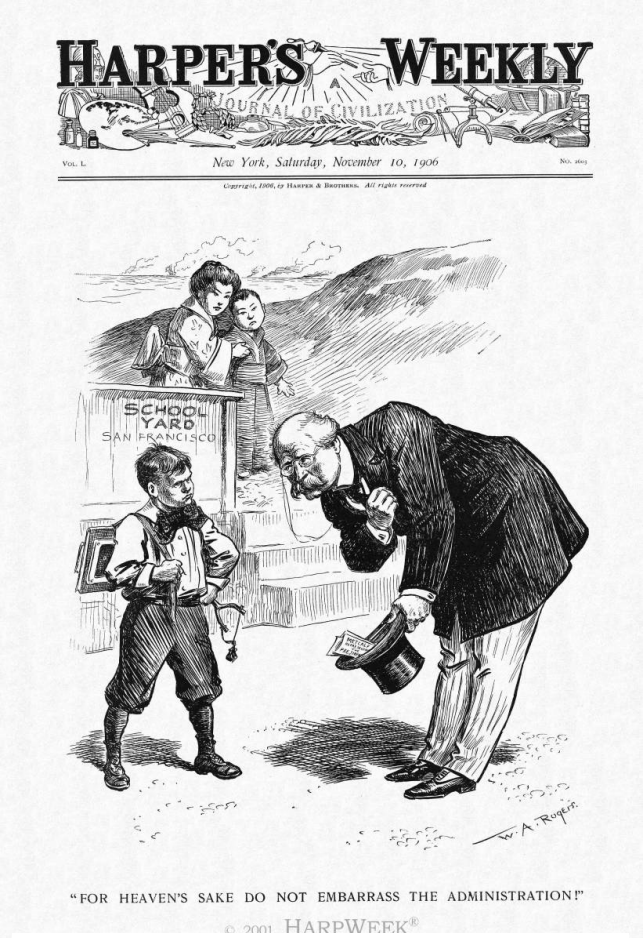
[2] Ibid.

[3] Robert C. Kennedy, "On This Day," https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/harp/1110.html.

What emerged from Roosevelt's diplomatic efforts was the "Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907." Japan agreed to prevent further emigration of Japanese laborers to the United States, except for Hawaii where Japanese labor benefitted American-owned agricultural companies, in exchange for San Francisco reversing its ban and allowing Japanese students to attend the city's public schools. As part of the agreement, Japan also acknowledged the right of the American government to deny entry to the U.S. of Japanese holding passports issued for Hawaii and other countries such as Canada or Mexico.[4]

While the Japanese government ceased issuing passports to male laborers headed for the mainland United States, parents, wives, and children could emigrate during this time.[5] In fact, 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 couples had children.[6]

Anti-Asian sentiment continued to grow locally and nationally during the first several decades of the twentieth century. The U.S. Congress enacted the Immigration Act of 1917 which banned 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, however, which in effect barred Japanese nationals from entering the United States.[7]



The San Francisco school board's decision to ban Japanese and other Asians from its public schools attracted national media attention, as demonstrated in this cartoon by Thomas Nast titled, "For Heaven's Sake Do Not Embarrass the Administration!" published by *Harper's Weekly* in 1906. (The New York Times Company and HarpWeek)

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 and third generations who were born in the U.S. are referred to as the *Nisei* and *Sansei*, respectfully.

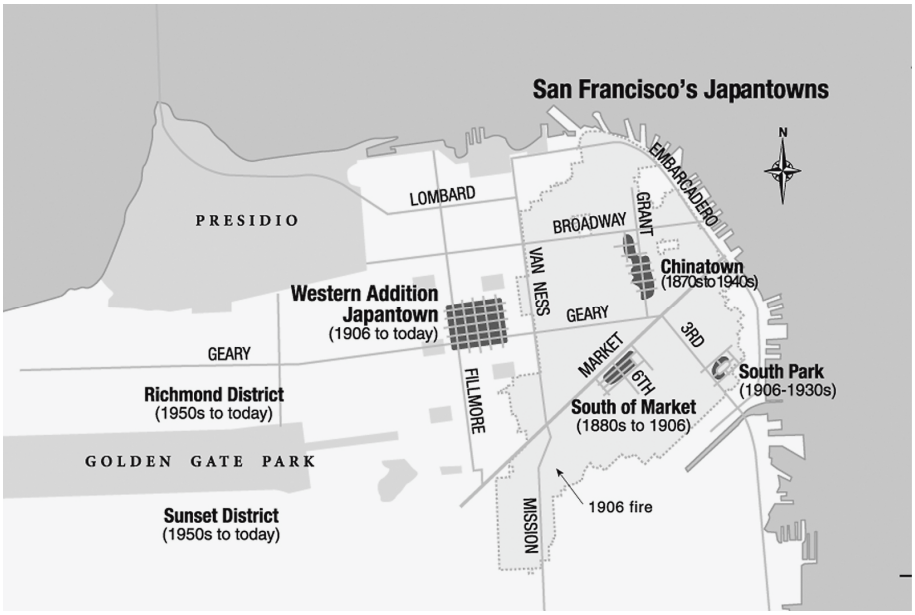
[4] Gopal Kshetry, *Foreigners in Japan: A Historical Perspective* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2008), 155.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Erica Lee, *The Making of Asian America: A History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016), 171.

Settlement of Japanese Americans in San Francisco

The earliest Japanese migrants to San Francisco arrived in 1869. By 1870, a Japanese consulate had opened in the city. San Francisco represented the principal port of entry for Asian immigrants to the United States and by 1906 had the largest Japanese population of any mainland U.S. city (Hawaii had the largest population overall). From 1910 to 1940 Asian immigrants to San Francisco first arrived at the U.S. Immigration Station on Angel Island, which had been established primarily to enforce the restrictions against Chinese immigration put in place by 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.[8]

San Francisco's first Japanese immigrants settled in Chinatown along Dupont Street between California and Bush streets where they, along with the Chinese, were marginalized and exploited for cheap labor. Chinatown represented one of the only neighborhoods where early Japanese migrants were permitted to live and work. Although little documentation exists about their occupations, it is assumed that they worked as general laborers, on the railroads, or performing various domestic service tasks.

Almost as soon as Japanese Americans began to settle in San Francisco did a large concentration of social, economic, and political organizations catering to *Issei* develop. Boarding houses, restaurants, barbershops, bathhouses, gambling houses, and pool halls were established within the community. Japanese services and businesses catered mostly to other Japanese immigrants. Additionally, many community organizations including churches, political organizations, and Japanese language schools formed and became community anchors that provided Japanese with "religious sustenance and a social life."[9]



A map of San Francisco's Japantowns.
(Ben Pease via *Images of America: San Francisco's Japantown* by the Japantown Task Force Inc.)

[8] California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Historic Preservation, *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California*, 112.
[9] Ibid.,118.

By the turn of the 20th century, the local Japanese population began moving into the South of Market area, particularly near Jessie and Stevenson streets between 5th and 7th streets. South of Market had been a working class and immigrant neighborhood since the 1870s and by the 1880s had begun attracting newly arrived Japanese migrants. From 1890 to 1900, the Japanese population of San Francisco increased from 590 to 1,781, representing a doubling in size. As the Japanese began establishing residences, rooming houses, and local businesses in the South of Market, the neighborhood developed into the city's first *Nihonjin-Machi*, or Japanese Peoples Town, a name coined by members of the community.[10] *Nihonjin Machi* in the South of Market was short-lived however, as San Francisco's worst natural disaster soon devastated the neighborhood.

Emergence of Japantown in the Western Addition

The 1906 earthquake and fire demolished both Chinatown and South of Market, where most Japanese in the city had lived up until that point, leaving them displaced from their homes. When South of Market was rebuilt following the disaster, it was reconceived primarily as a high-density commercial and industrial area, further locking out many of the poor and working class immigrant communities who had previously resided there. Japanese Americans, along with many other communities of color who had been displaced during the disaster, settled in the Western Addition, which was still largely intact.



Original Japantown around South Park in 1910 (left)
(San Francisco Public Library, Historical Photograph Collection)



The Miho family, owners of the Higoya Hotel in South Park, pose for a photo with friends, date unkown.
(Florence Nakumura via *Images of America: San Francisco's Japantown* by the Japantown Task Force Inc.

The Western Addition emerged during the 1850s following the signing of the Van Ness Ordinance which spurred development in the area. The introduction of the cable car in the 1870s led to further growth and the development of streetcar suburbs in the area. Many of the homes in the Western Addition were single-family Victorians built by the Real Estate Associates based on pattern books and using mass production techniques. By the late 19th century, the Western Addition was considered an upper-middle class professional neighborhood home to a mix of European immigrants, primarily German and Jewish. In fact, the Western Addition had the highest Jewish population of any urban area outside of New York City during the 1870s.[11]

In the years immediately following the 1906 disaster, the Western Addition provided temporary refuge to the ethnic communities that were displaced from other parts of the city. In addition to Japanese, many other ethnic groups including African Americans, Mexican Americans, Filipinos, and Koreans also

[10] Donna Graves and Page & Turnbull, *Japantown Historic Context Statement* (San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2011), 28.
[11] Ibid., 13.

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.[12]

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.[13] Japanese restaurants, laundries, art stores, and shoe stores catered to Japanese clientele. Social, cultural, religious, and educational organizations emerged as well. Like the Japanese enclave in the South of Market before it, local residents dubbed the neighborhood, *Nihonjin Machi,* which in Japanese means, "Japanese people's town." The neighborhood would later become recognized throughout San Francisco as *Nihonmachi* or "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. Japantown in the Western Addition 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.



Post Street business district in Japantown, 1942.
(Bancroft Library via *Images of America: San Francisco's Japantown*, Japantown Task Force Inc.)

Japanese Exclusion and Restriction

The long history of institutionalized racism and discrimination against people of Japanese ancestry in the United States dates to the 19th century when Japanese immigrants first arrived in the country. Initially, Japanese laborers were viewed exclusively as a source of temporary labor that was easy to exploit. As the Japanese population continued to grow, concerns among whites mounted, as they saw Japanese people as "unassimilable and potentially capable of overrunning the state."[14] Racially charged attacks against Japanese people also proliferated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The riots in Vacaville (1890), Riverside (1896), and Redlands (1898) are just a few of the documented acts of violence that targeted Japanese Americans.[15]

American hostility towards Japanese people increased at the turn of the century following Japan's victory in the 1905 Russo-Japanese War.[16] Japan's military strength was seen as a threat to the United States from abroad and simultaneously, Japanese people living in the United States were seen as an economic threat to white Americans. In San Francisco, anti-Japanese sentiment was widespread throughout the city. Anti-Japanese propaganda proliferated through local news sources, including the

[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid, 28.
[14] California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Historic Preservation, *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California*, 121.
[15] Kinmon Gakuen, "History of the Golden Gate Institute: 100th Anniversary: Golden Gate Institute Japanese Language and Cultural School 1911-2011," (2011), 11.
[16] Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York: The Free Press, 1998) 1, 51-52.

San Francisco Chronicle, which adopted an anti-Japanese campaign as evident in this quote from a 1905 article:

> 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.[17]

The Asiatic Exclusion League 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 its first actions was successfully lobbying the San Francisco Board of Education to ban Japanese and Korean students from attending San Francisco public schools. As a result, Japanese and Korean students were forced in 1906 to attend the Chinese segregated Oriental School. Chinese students had already been forced to attend separate schools for nearly five decades. The California legislature continued to consider laws aimed at restricting the rights of Japanese Americans on a yearly basis.[18]

In 1922, the Supreme Court case of *Takao Ozawa v. United States* determined that Japanese were not white or Caucasian as defined by law and therefore ineligible for gaining U.S. citizenship under the 1790 Naturalization Act which "expressly allowed the naturalization of only white persons."[19] In addition, although the 14th amendment granted African Americans full citizenship in 1868, Japanese Americans did not receive the same status. In 1924, the Immigration Act, also known as the Asian Exclusion Act, was signed into law by President Calvin Coolidge and completely bared Asian immigrants from entering the United States.[20] Laws were also passed that limited the ability of Japanese Americans to own and lease land.



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

SAN FRANCISCO'S MAYOR WANTS EXCLUSION ACT TO BAR THE JAPS.

EUGENE E. SCHMITZ, LABOR CHAMPION, REGARDS THEM AS A FAR GREATER MENACE THAN THE CHINESE.

By E. C. Leffingwell.

Copyright 1905, by Newspaper Enterprise Ass'n.

Anti-Japanese newspaper ads appearing in the *San Francisco Chronicle* March 13, 1905 (left) and April 1, 1905 (right). (*San Francisco Chronicle* via the Densho Digital Repository)

[17] E.C. Leffingwell, "San Francisco's Mayor Wants Exclusion Act to Bar the Japs," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 1, 1905.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, 120-122.
[20] United States Department of State, Office of the Historian, "The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)," accessed January 22, 2019, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act.

Japanese Language Schools in California

Demands for services pertaining specifically to Nisei increased during and after the second wave of Japanese immigration to the United States. This included Japanese language schools, the first of which began to appear in California and Hawaii at the turn of the twentieth century, many of which were connected to Buddhist temples or Christian churches.[21] Language schools also served as a form of childcare for Japanese laborers, particularly in Hawaii where thousands of Japanese migrants worked on American-owned sugar plantations. The first known Japanese language schools that were established outside of Japan emerged in Hawaii in the 1890s, while the earliest schools established on the U.S. mainland opened in Seattle and San Francisco in 1902 and in Sacramento in 1903.

Japanese language schools were particularly valued as an important tool for passing down language and culture to Nisei children. Other reasons that led to the emergence of Japanese language schools are described in the following account, written by the grandson of a principal of Japanese language school, Kinmon Gakuen:

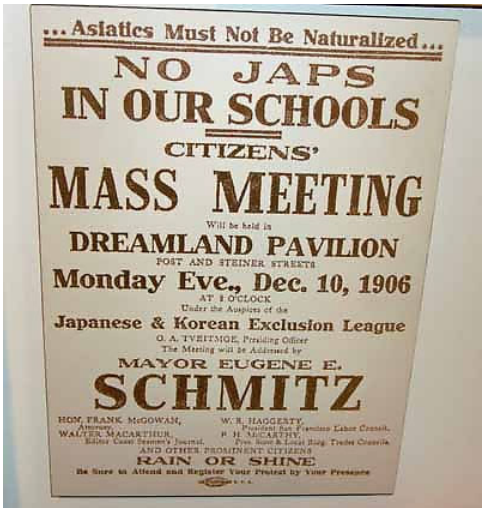
> The ability for the Nisei to speak the language of their parents' native country was important in more ways than one. First, most Issei were unable to speak coherent English, the language that their children were learning in the public schools, so in order for the family members to communicate with one another, the children had to learn Japanese as part of their every day lifestyle. Second, the Japanese community was so closely knit and separate from the rest of society that its members would shop almost exclusively at Japanese stores, eat at Japanese restaurants and deal with Japanese people all the time, so a command of the Japanese language was helpful when communicating the Issei-owned businesses. Third, the Issei thought that if their children ever went to Japan, their ability to communicate with relatives and understand their ways would make "returning" to Japan easier.[22]

Japanese American organizations actively promoted language schools for Niesi children and influences from Japan further spurred interest. In 1911 influential Japanese education scholar, Dr. Ianzo Nitobe, arrived in the United States to promote his education philosophy to large audiences at public universities. Japanese language schools continued to open throughout California and by 1931, there were 196 operating in the state.[23]

While Japanese language schools emerged out of a desire on the part of the *Issei* to educate the *Nisei* and future generations, the story of Japanese language schools in the U.S. is undoubtedly tied to historical patterns of discrimination against Asians in the country's public education system. As discussed earlier,

[21] Kinmon Gakuen, "History of the Golden Gate Institute: 100th Anniversary: Golden Gate Institute Japanese Language and Cultural School 1911-2011," (2011), 9.
[22] Ron Fujie, "The Preservation of the Japanese Heritage: A History of the Japanese Language Schools in California and the Life of Koshi Suzuki," prepared for an Asian-American Studies 122 course, college and date unknown, Kinmon Gakuen archives, 2.
[23] Ibid., 10.

San Francisco was the primary hotbed of anti-Asian sentiment in the United States during the early twentieth century. On October 11, 1906, San Francisco passed a law banning Japanese and Koreans from attending the city's public schools (a ban on Chinese had already existed).[24] Because of the ban, Japanese language schools took in "the outcast students and accept[ed] the responsibility of educating them full time."[25] The segregation ban was repealed in 1907 when Japan and the United States entered into the Gentlemen's Agreement, described previously.[26]



Flyer for a mass meeting called by the Japanese & Korean Exclusion League in San Francisco, 1906.
(Densho Digital Repository)

While outside politics influenced the operations of Japanese language schools in the U.S., "[i]t is important to note that the first real change in the teaching policy of the Japanese language schools was initiated by the teachers and administrators of the schools themselves."[27] In 1912, the Japanese Association of America organized Japanese language schools and worked to establish a set of unified policies to articulate the goals of all such schools. The goals ranged from "cultivat[ing] people who would live in this country permanently and be active in this country," to providing children with a moral education "based on Emperor Meiji's imperialistic decree on the education of Japanese."[28] All policies acknowledged the role of Japanese language schools in providing a bi-cultural education to its youth. [29] The work of the Japanese Association of America spurred the formation of the Japanese Educational Association of America, which was made up of representatives from Japanese language schools throughout the country. In June 1913 the organization held a conference in San Francisco during which its bylaws and policies were established.[30]

The 1920s witnessed an uptick in discriminatory policies aimed at Japanese in the United States, as well as laws targeting language schools of all kinds. In the case of the latter, the intent was generally to restrict German language schools which were perceived as a threat in the years following World War I, but they also impacted Japanese language schools. The Parker Bill of 1921, for example, required teachers and administrators of foreign language schools to obtain licenses from the Superintendent of Public Education to demonstrate an understanding of U.S. history and citizenship, and to pledge loyalty to the United States of America. Restrictions on hours of operations and textbooks were also placed upon foreign language schools.[31] Such rampant discriminatory policies were paused in 1927 when the Supreme Court ruled in favor of lifting all controls on foreign language teachers.[32]

[24] Kennedy, Robert C. "On This Day" New York Times Archives.
[25] Fujie, "The Preservation of the Japanese Heritage,"
[26] Kinmon Gakuen, "History of the Golden Gate Institute: 100th Anniversary: Golden Gate Institute Japanese Language and Cultural School 1911-2011," (2011), 10.
[27] Fujie, 11.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., 12.
[31] Noriko Asato, *Teaching Mikadoism: The Attack on Japanese Language Schools in Hawaii, California, and Washington, 1919-1927* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 67.
[32] Densho, "Evacuation or Exclusion? Japanese Americans Exiled," Discover Nikkei, accessed December 23, 2019, http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2011/2/22/evacuation-or-exclusion/.

The following year, the *Nichi Bei Shimbun* newspaper published an article noting a surge in the number of Japanese language schools and heralding their increasingly important role as community gathering spaces. In addition to teaching youth Japanese language skills, "[t]hey also strongly felt that Japanese-language schools had come to be the center of the Japanese community. In practical terms, the school building was often used as a meeting place for the parent associations and youth groups. In their eyes, Japanese-language schools were replacing functions once played by local Japanese Associations."[33]

Kinmon Gakuen/The Golden Gate Institute

The first Japanese language school established in San Francisco was the Nihon Shōgakkō (Japanese Elementary School), which opened in 1902 in a home located at O'Farrell and Ellis streets in today's Union Square area. In 1903 a second Japanese language school, Meiji Shōgakkō, was established by Hongwanji Buddhist missionaries on Polk Street.[34] Other accounts note the existence of a third Japanese language school, the Homei Primary School, which operated out of a church at 134 Collins Street in today's Jordan Park neighborhood.[35] The 1906 earthquake and fire, however, disrupted, if not destroyed, these early Japanese language schools in San Francisco.

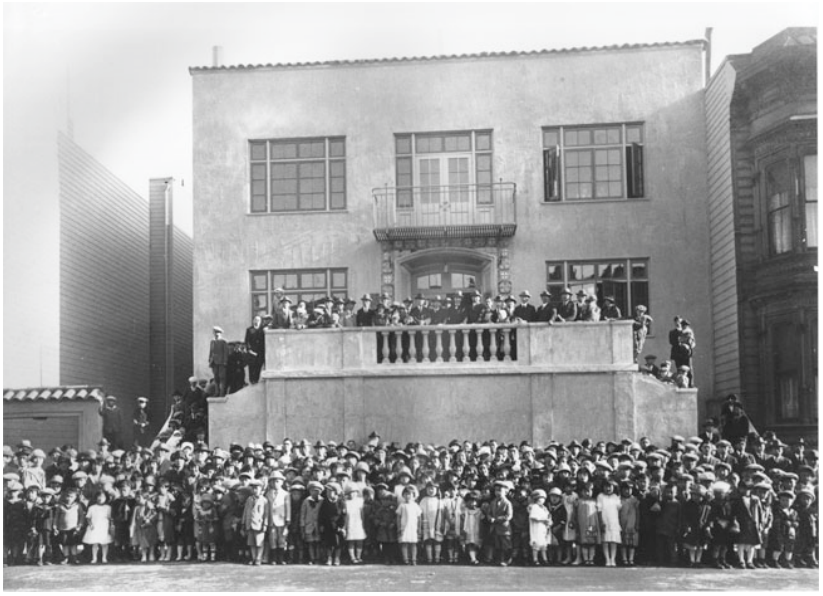
Several years after the disaster in 1910, a core group of activists from the Japanese American Association gathered to establish an organization that would support educational opportunities for their children. What emerged was Kinmon Gakuen, which in English translates to "the Golden Gate Institute." In 1911, the newly established school rented a space at 2031 Bush Street for its operations and hired Masayoshi Kamada as its first principal. Kamada was recommended for the position by Dr. Inazo Nitobe, the notable Japanese educational leader and a significant figure in Japan-United States relations. Kinmon Gakuen would later go on to become one of the largest Japanese language schools in California.



An early photo of the students and faculty of Kinmon Gakuen taken in 1911, the year it opened. (Kinmon Gakuen)

[33] Toyotomi Morimoto, *Japanese Americans and Cultural Continuity: Maintaining Language Through Heritage* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1997) 72.
[34] Noriko Asato, *Teaching Mikadoism: The Attack on Japanese Language Schools in Hawaii, California, and Washington, 1919-1927* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 45.
[35] Fujie, 5.

In 1918, a group of Japanese American citizen advocates met with the Japanese Consulate to make plans for a permanent building for Kinmon Gakuen. Japanese residents raised large sums of money to fund the construction of a new purpose-built educational facility at 2031 Bush Street. After years of planning and fundraising, the ground-breaking ceremony for the new building was held on November 29, 1925 and construction of the new building was completed in 1926. A dedication ceremony honoring the opening of the school was held on April 26, 1926 and classes commenced soon after.[36]



The purpose-built 1926 Kinmon Gakuen Building at 2031 Bush Street, 1927.
(Kinmon Gakuen)

Ron Fujie, the grandson of one of Kinmon Gakuen's first principals, Koshi Suzuki, prepared a report on Kinmon Gakuen's history in which he describes how the building was used by youth of various age groups:

> The new building had three stories; the bottom story was the auditorium, also used by the kindergarten, the middle floor held administrative and classrooms, and the top floor consisted of classrooms. …
>
> Each level of students (pre-school, primary, junior high, high school) came at different times of the day, each new wave filling the six classrooms. The pupils of Kinmon Gakuen came from the neighborhood schools, with the primary school children coming from the Emerson and Raphael Weill schools; the junior high students coming from Roosevelt and John Swet, and the high school students came from Lowell, Commerce and Girls' high schools….
>
> The regular primary school ended at 2:30 p.m., so the Japanese school started at 3 o'clock, beginning with the primary children. They stayed until 4 p.m., at which time the junior high and high school students came and stayed until 6 p.m. The kindergarten children occupied the auditorium…"[37]

[36] Donna Graves and Page & Turnbull, *Japantown Historic Context Statement*, prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department (2011), 39.

[37] Fujie, 15.

Fujie further relates that the majority of the school's teachers were married women whose husbands worked during the day. There were a total of six classrooms, plus the auditorium which was used by the kindergarten classes.[38]

Kinmon Gakuen thrived over 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, which reached 500 students, and the peak of Japanese language school enrollment in the United States. A graduation ceremony was held for high school and kindergarten graduates of Kinmon Gakuen each year in May. As noted by Fujie, "promotion from one grade to another involved a large-scale program held in the auditorium, attended by the parents of the students…Every year a picture of the graduates and the kindergarten were taken."[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."[40] To that end, English speech contests were held at the Kinmon Gakuen auditorium where *Nisei* students competed against one another as masters of the English language. One such account was documented by Toyotomi Morimoto, author of *Japanese Americans and Cultural Continuity: Maintaining Language and Heritage*:

> Japanese-language speech contests were frequently held for young members of the Japanese communities…English speech contests were also common events for the Nisei. Ida Shimanouchi was the winner of an oratorical contest at the Kinmon Gakuen auditorium in San Francisco in May 1933. In her speech, she insisted that the future of the Pacific was with the Nisei, stating: "Upon them [Nisei] lie the solution to the development of the great peaceful future of the Pacific."[41]

Kinmon Gakuen also offered opportunities for its students to socialize and explore the outdoors. For a period of time the school organized a Russian River Summer Camp for its students, as captured in the photographs below.



The Kinmon Gakuen Russian River Summer Camp, 1929.
(Kinmon Gakuen)

[38] Ibid.
[39] Fujie, 16.
[40] Toyotomi Morimoto, Japanese *Americans and Cultural Continuity: Maintaining Language Through Heritage* (Taylor and Francis, New York, 1997), 146.
[41] Ibid., 71.

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 *magna,* which visually expressed the Japanese American immigrant experience, was exhibited at Kinmon Gakuen. Among them was Henry Kiyama's *The Four Immigrants Magna* (1931).[42]



Japanese Doll Friendship Mission Display at Kinmon Gakuen, 1927.
(Kinmon Gakuen)

The success of Kinmon Gakuen caught the eye of Japanese royalty in the 1930s. In 1931, Japanese Prince and Princess Takamatsu visited classes at Kinmon Gakuen during a trip to the area. A few years later in 1933, the school was once again visited by royalty—this time by Prince and Princess Kaya.[43] This period marked a time when the institute maintained a strong relationship with Japan.



Kinmon Gakuen students during a 1931 visit by Prince and Princess Takamatsu (left) and a photograph of Prince and Princess Kaya who visited Kinmon Gakuen in 1934 (right).
(Kinmon Gakuen)

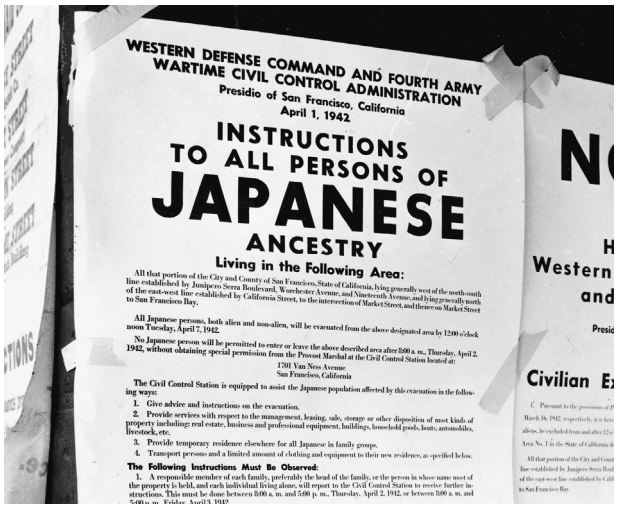
[42] Henry Kiyama, *The Four Immigrants Magna* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1931).
[43] Kinmon Gakuen, "History of the Golden Gate Institute:100th Anniversary: Golden Gate Institute Japanese Language and Cultural School 1911-2011" (2011), 13.

Outbreak of World War II

Acts of violence and discrimination against Japanese continued to escalate well into the 1940s as mass "anti-Japanese hysteria" beset San Francisco. Leading up to World War II, tensions between the United States and Japan steadily increased. The U.S. government began to scrutinize Japanese language schools for their suspected involvement in "anti-American" activities. 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.[44] The U.S. government feared that Japanese language schools were working in cooperation with Japan, turning their students into spies.

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

Among the first people of Japanese who were arrested by the FBI and detained in jails as "enemy aliens" included community leaders and others deemed a "threat to democracy." This generally included prominent businessmen, Japanese clergy, and school teachers. At first, only those considered particularly dangerous were sent into jails and concentration camps, but eventually any and every person of Japanese ancestry in the United States was detained during World War II. This affected California the greatest, where most of the country's Japanese and Japanese Americans lived.


WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY
WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION
Presidio of San Francisco, California
April 1, 1942

INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

Living in the Following Area:

All that portion of the City and County of San Francisco, State of California, lying generally west of the north-south line established by Junipero Serra Boulevard, Worchester Avenue, and Nineteenth Avenue, and lying generally north of the east-west line established by California Street, to the intersection of Market Street, and thence on Market Street to San Francisco Bay.

All Japanese persons, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above designated area by 12:00 o'clock noon Tuesday, April 7, 1942.

No Japanese person will be permitted to enter or leave the above described area after 5:00 a. m., Thursday, April 2, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the Provost Marshal at the Civil Control Station located at:

1701 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, California

The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:

1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.
2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property including: real estate, business and professional equipment, buildings, household goods, boats, automobiles, livestock, etc.
3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.
4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence, as specified below.

The Following Instructions Must Be Observed:

1. A responsible member of each family, preferably the head of the family, or the person in whose name most of the property is held, and each individual living alone, will report to the Civil Control Station to receive further instructions. This must be done between 8:00 a. m. and 5:00 p. m., Thursday, April 2, 1942, or between 8:00 a. m. and

An Exclusion Order posted in 1942.
(Wikimedia Commons)

[44] Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Seventy- Seventh Congress, *Report on Japanese Activities* (February 28, 1942).

Kinmon Gakuen and Japanese Incarceration

As home to San Francisco's largest Japanese language school and as one of the central community gathering spaces in Japantown, 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.



The last cohort of Kinmon graduates with Principal Koshi Suzuki before Japanese Americans were interned during World War II, May 1941.
(Japantown History Walk/nddcreative.com)

As Japanese Americans reported to 2031 Bush Street, they were forced to register themselves and their families and undergo vaccinations as "a safeguard to public health."[45] 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 from Kinmon Gakuen to Tanforan, a former racetrack facility in San Bruno. From there they were taken to permanent concentration camps in the desert. Most San Francisco residents were taken to Topaz Camp near Abraham, Utah where they lived behind barbed wire under the constant surveillance of military guards.[46]



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 was monitored. Eventually people living in the camps were given onsite jobs, and school was held for students so long as their education aligned with "American values" and did not promote 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 state

[45] The Bancroft Library,"Finding Aid to War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement, 1942-1945 circa 1941-1947" (University of California, Berkeley).
[46] Graves and Page & Turnbull, 39.

departments of education who taught Japanese students with special standards set by each state.[47] 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 scrutiny and were forbidden from using or teaching the Japanese language. Japanese American students who were beginning or continuing a higher education program at an American university were permitted to leave camps through an application process. Japanese Americans remained in the camps until the war ended in 1945 and the United States released detainees, allowing for their return to the West Coast.[48]



San Francisco's Japanese residents line up at the side entrance to Kinmon Gakuen where they were instructed to report for relocation (left). A bus outside of 2031 Bush Street taking Japanese Americans to relocation centers (right).
(The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement Collection. Photographs by Dorothea Lange.)



Photos from the first day of evacuation in Japantown, when about 660 merchants, shop-keepers, and tradespeople were evacuated, April 29, 1942.
(UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library, War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement Collection. Photographs by Dorothea Lange.)

[47] War Relocation Authority, *Relocation of Japanese Americans* (Washington, D.C., 1943), Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco, accessed January 23, 2019, http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist10/relocbook.html.
[48] Ibid.

A Growing African American Population in the Western Addition

African Americans had settled in the Western Addition in significant numbers after the 1906 earthquake and fire that ravaged San Francisco. 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.[49] 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 resulted in the relocation of tens of thousands of workers to the Bay Area, many of whom were African Americans from the American South. Many settled in existing enclaves in Oakland, Richmond, and Sausalito in addition to San Francisco where workers settled in the Fillmore and near the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard.

Between 1940 and 1945, the African American population in San Francisco increased by 797 percent, drastically changing the city's demographic composition. [50] As the Japanese community was exiled from the city, African Americans became the largest racial or ethnic minority group in San Francisco. San Francisco was also in the midst of a severe housing shortage that was only exacerbated by the wartime population growth. Prior to the war, African Americans had settled primarily in areas where racial covenants and deed restrictions were not in place, primarily in Chinatown, the Western Addition, and South of Market. As the population grew exponentially in a short amount of time, it became much more difficult for anyone, but especially African Americans, to secure housing in San Francisco. African American newcomers began to inhabit the housing stock in Japantown that had previously been occupied by the Japanese American community.[51] 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."[52] Multiple families were forced to live in flats, sometimes 15 people resided in a room with only one window.[53]

Booker T. Washington Community Service Center

Established in 1919, the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center (BTWCSC) formed to provide recreational and social services for African Americans who were denied access to opportunities enjoyed by whites. It was a group of women organizers who spearheaded the effort with the goal of increasing social services for Black families and youth.[54] The center's physical location changed several times throughout its history. In 1920, it operated in the basement of a building on Geary Boulevard but as demand for services grew, it relocated to 1433 Divisadero Street. By 1942, it had moved into the Kinmon Gakuen building at 2031 Bush Street, which the Japanese language and culture school vacated during World War II.

During this period the BTWCSC evolved within the context and in response to the needs of San Francisco's Black community. The growing population and urgent issues surrounding housing, health, and living conditions influenced the direction of the organization well into the 1940s. It served as a space

[49] Ibid.
[50] Tim Kelley Consulting, The Alfred Williams Consultancy, VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting, *San Francisco African American Citywide Historic Context Statement 1579-2014* (San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2015), 80.
[51] Ibid., 82.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., 83
[54] Graves and Page & Turnbull, 19.

for the African American community to meet and organize, and it created a platform from which Black community leaders and constituents could voice their concerns to elected officials and city officials.[55]

Robert B. Flippin served as the center's executive director during its tenure at 2031 Bush Street. Flippin was a community activist involved in many Black community and civic institutions, including the San Francisco branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for which he was treasurer. He also sponsored the first alcoholics anonymous program ever held in one of the country's correctional facilities. And as a local reporter, Flippin wrote for the Associated Negro Press and the *San Francisco Chronicle's* "In the Districts" Sunday section, 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. He was appointed in 1943 to the San Francisco Housing Authority to help manage an integrated public housing project in the Western Addition known as Westside Courts. Given that he was appointed with the consent of the mayor, local housing authority commissioners, and the U.S. Housing Authority, Flippin's appointment represented one of the most prominent political appointments of any Black San Franciscan up until that point.



New Negro Red Cross Center

Dedicated to war service the Booker T. Washington Red Cross Center, 2031 Bush street, is ready for action today following the flag raising and dedicatory ceremonies held at the new Negro center yesterday. The official opening

Red Cross officials, headed by Mrs. William P. Roth, chairman of Volunteer Special Services, Robert B. Elliott, manager of the San Francisco chapter, and Rabbi Irving F. Reichert, member of the board of directors of Red Cross. In this picture, Mrs. Marshall Madison, vice

Services for the Red Cross, and Red Cross Chairman of Production Corps. Mrs. Flotty Cheeks (right-center) look over the center's new flag, with Mrs. Anna Magruder, chairman of this new Red Cross unit, and Robert Flippin, executive secretary of the

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

In addition to community organizing around housing and living conditions, the BTWCSC 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. [56]

The BTWCSC also became a space where basic quality of life services were directly delivered to the community. On January 10, 1943, the center opened a "New Negro Red Cross Center" in the building and public health services like chest x-rays were given during a tuberculosis outbreak. As a youth-serving agency, the center offered child development services, including a nursery school and summer programs, and represented one of the only places where children from the neighborhood could recreate and play outdoors and away from the busy streets.

[55] "S.F. Housing Officials Will Meet Today," *San Francisco Chronicle,* January 6, 1943.
[56] "More on the Western Addition Radio Program," *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 30, 1942.

Nikkei Return to Japantown

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."[57] Most Japanese permanently lost property and personal belongings during incarceration. Upon their return to Japantown, Japanese found that their former residences were being inhabited by African Americans who had relocated to San Francisco during the war. The situation was described by Yori Wada, a Japanese American who worked for the BTWCSC after the war:

> So there was a little difficulty when the Japanese families started moving back into San Francisco--that they found their homes and apartments, et cetera, occupied by blacks. So it was a very touchy situation in order that the black residents find other places so that the Japanese could move back in…
>
> ..and so although they were moved, many of them went to other parts of the Western Addition or Hunters Point or moved into the public housing project, because by that time the war industries were closed so that many of them were unemployed and had no way to pay. So it was a kind of combination of happenstance and bad luck for the black residents in order that they would move out of private homes and apartments in order to give way to the Japanese, but I think it went pretty well.[58]

In many cases, property and possessions were safeguarded by sympathetic African Americans and others and eventually returned to Japanese Americans. Many churches and civic groups, including the BTWCSC, established hostels for many of the newly homeless Japanese Americans returning home.[59] 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. As the entire community had been uprooted, returning to normal was no easy feat. Yet, despite the trauma and shock they experienced, returning Japanese families were eager to rebuild their lives, businesses, and community organizations.

In the years following World War II, Robert B. Flippin implemented a multicultural programming component to the BTWCSC agenda. He 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.[60] The relationship between the Black and Japanese American communities within San Francisco's Western Addition neighborhood continued to strengthen. Flippin's successor, James E. Stratten, continued to create programming opportunities that worked to bring the Black and Japanese 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.

---

[57] 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

[58] Yori Wada, oral history transcript by Gabrielle Morris, "Working for youth and social justice: the YMCA, the University of California, and the Stulsaft Foundation: oral history transcript for Yori Wada," (Berkeley: Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office, accessed March 26, 2019, "https://oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb7r29p1vn;NAAN=13030&doc.view=frames&chunk.id=div00039&toc.depth=1&toc.id=div00038&brand=oac4&query=booker

[59] Ibid.

[60] Shelley Bradford Bell, "Legacy of Victory: History of the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center, 1920 through the 1970s," (Booker T. Washington Community Services Center, n.d.), 7, accessed December 20, 2018, http://btwcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/A-Legacy-of-Victory-History-of-the-BTWCSC-2.pdf.

In an oral interview, former Kinmon Gakuen student, Jerry S. Tondo, offers a personal account of the relationship between the Japanese American and African American communities who used the building:

> It also was a place where you learned to appreciate your Japanese heritage. This was really important during the era when there was so much anti-Japanese sentiment before WWII and immediately after. Japanese families were not wanted back in Japantown but we were fortunate that the Booker T. Washington Center utilized the facility during the War and kept it from being vandalized. I think that is also the reason why the African American and Japanese American communities have always been close and supportive of one another through all of the challenges faced then and even now.[61]

In 1948, three years after Japanese Americans had returned to Japantown, a group of Kinmon Gakuen board members met to plan for the organization's reopening. Since the building at 2031 remained occupied by the BTWCSC, Kinmon Gakuen rented a space offsite temporarily until the BTWCSC found a new permanent home. In 1949, Koshi Suzuki, who had been the principal of Kinmon Gakuen since 1918, reassumed his position at the helm of the school.

In 1952, the BTWCSC 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 the BTWCSC's new building on Presidio Avenue, which was also a new, purpose-built community facility. "Many of the Japanese merchants made contributions and solicited contributions from their customers and friends"[62] and contributions were welcomed because "Booker T. was one of the places that had programs largely for Japanese-American youth."[63] When the new facility opened at 800 Presidio Avenue, it was declared that the center was "dedicated…for use of all races" to gather, hold meetings, events and programs.[64]



The Woolaroc starts its 2457-mile journey over the Pacific to Hawaii

'You Know, There's a Need for a Place Like This . . .'

Booker T. Washington Center Dedicated...for Use of All Races

What began in 1918 as a center and gymnasium facilities the center would offer recreation to everyone from 6 to 60, and in time even nursery facilities.

Edward Shands, groupwork supervisor, said that while the building was being constructed to move the center from its former address at 2031 Bush street, some persons had broken into the half-completed structure.

"Evidently they were impatient for us to finish up on this new place, because they laid tiling over half of one of the downstairs recreation rooms."

"They didn't do a first rate job," said Shands with a smile, "but they defaced nothing else. They just laid some tiling one week end when everyone was out of the building."

"I guess they were in a hurry for us to open up. You know there's a need for a place like this, a place where people can get together to learn things like ceramics and home economics, and play games like basketball and handball, and sing and folk dance."

ANOTHER SPEECH

In one of the dedication talks, Dr. Ralph A. Reynolds, president of the center's board of directors, spoke of the need people in the neighborhood felt to have some place to go in the evening.

Outside on Presidio avenue a gang of eight boys were gathered.

Gump's india

IT WON'T SOAK OFF!

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

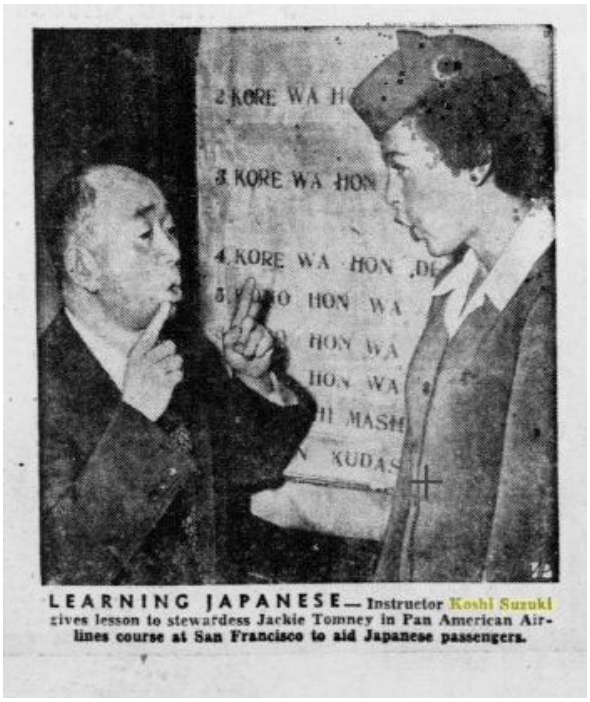
At the time of the 1950 census, other ethnic groups far outnumbered the Japanese population in Japantown.[65] Within two years, however, San Francisco's Japanese American population was back to its pre-war population.[66]

---

[61] Jerry S. Tondo, Interview by Diane Matsuda, 2019.
[62] Ibid., 10
[63] Ibid.
[64] "Booker T. Washington Center Dedicated… for Use of All Races" *San Francisco Chronicle,* August 17, 1952.
[65] Graves and Page & Turnbull, 52.
[66] Graves and Page & Turnbull, 48.

Kinmon Gakuen Returns to 2031 Bush Street

Kinmon Gakuen returned to its original location at 2031 Bush Street in May of 1952.[67] Although enrollment levels were lower than they had been before the war, 88 students had enrolled in courses upon the reopening of the building. Throughout the 1950s Kinmon Gakuen continued to expand its programing and reinserted itself as a vital part of the Japantown community. Kinmon Gakuen's principal since 1918, Koshi Suzuki, worked hard to bring the school back to life and began teaching an American citizenship class on the weekends, reaching an audience of about 70 students.[68] Two years later in 1954, Kinmon Gakuen language teachers expanded their services to include adult English classes. Upon Suzuki's death in 1958, the Emperor of Japan bestowed him with a posthumous award and a monument was erected in his honor in Saitama, Japan.[69]



lessons to a Japanese stewardess, 1954.
(Santa Cruz Sentinel, Volume 99, Number 101, 29 April 1954)

Suzuki was succeeded by Tomi Osaki. According to Osaki's grandson, Paul Osaki, who attended Kinmon Gakuen from 1965 to 1968, his grandmother continued the hard work of rebuilding the community institution that had suffered during the war:

> The Kinmon experience also gave me a sense of respect for my grandmother who was charged to build up the attendance of students after World War II. Back then, very few women made it to the level of being a Principal, particularly in Japanese hierarchal circles. She even received two Kunsho Awards of the highest rank. That is something that very few people, even today, are awarded. (Award from the Emperor of Japan for strengthening US-Japan ties and providing a benefit to your community).[70]

[67] Kinmon Gakuen, "History of the Golden Gate Institute," (2011) 16.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ron Fujie, "The Preservation of the Japanese Heritage: A History of the Japanese Lanugage Schools in California and the Life of Koshi Suzuki," prepared for Asian American Studies term project, from the archives of Kinmon Gakuen, n.d.
[70] Paul Osaki, Interview by Diane Matsuda, 2019.



Crowd at Kinmon Gakuen eagerly awaiting a glimpse of the
Prince and Princess (left), the Crown Prince and Princess of Japan (right) during their visit in 1960.
(Kinmon Gakuen)

In addition to language courses, Kinmon Gakuen offered classes in cultural traditions such as calligraphy, music, and judo, and hosted numerous community and cultural events. As described by Paul Osaki:

> Kinmon Gakuen gave students a holistic introduction to Japanese culture. Of course language was of primary concern but students also learned about other things such as how to bow; how to address teachers or those who you were to show great respect; the centuries old way of writing with a brush and making your own ink; seeing people on the movie screen that looked like you-we never saw that in mainstream cinemas.[71]

Ruby Murakami Hata, who also attended Kinmon Gakuen during the 1960s, also recalls her time at the Japanese language school:

> I went daily after regular school. First when I was a primary school student at Claire Lilienthal and then when I went to Roosevelt Middle School. I did not go to Kinmon by choice. My mother insisted that I attend but I did receive very good grades throughout my time there. It was the only time that I came home with "A's" on my report card. When I was young, there were not too many activities that young people who didn't have a lot of money could do after school and during the summer so I went to Japanese school…
>
> There were four classrooms at Kinmon. I was in Abe Sensei's class. A little above beginner level. We used to read to the teacher and copy the book we were assigned. We had calligraphy too. I think we had to say speeches too and sing Japanese songs. The building looks the same now as it did when I went to school there and the desks are so old that they even had inkwells.

[71] Paul Osaki, Interivew by Diane Matsuda, 2019.

> Kinmon was one place that I was able to see other Japanese Americans. My primary school was all white. It was the only place that I was able to interact with other Asians so it made me feel more comfortable as I always felt out of place with all of the rich white kids.[72]

Murakami was not alone in her experience. Another former student of the same period, Glenn Osaki, reflected a similar sentiment regarding the sense of belonging he felt while at Kinmon Gakuen:

> Initially I was much more comfortable at my regular school. I went to school in the Sunset District where there were very few Japanese students but after hanging around with the Japanese American students at Kinmon, I enjoyed being around them more because it was comfortable and familiar. We were taught things at home dealing with our culture, manners, food that my white friends did not understand.
>
> Kinmon introduced me to my culture. I became more proud of being Japanese and identified with being Japanese. I remember being called a very racist word at school and was beat up by white kids because of my race so to have a safe place and group who understood what I was going through was great.[73]

Jerry S. Tondo, too, felt at home while spending time at Kinmon Gakuen, as he described during an oral interview:

> It was a school where you did not have to explain to your classmates what an onigiri (rice ball) was or what you were doing on New Years or having people around you thinking it was strange to eat tofu and raw fish. We were all Japanese Americans sent to learn about our cultural heritage. That commonality allowed us to create lifelong friendships that continue until this day.[74]



Japanese language students pose for a photo c.1960
(Kinmon Gakuen)

[72] Ruby Murakami Hata, Interview by Diane Matdusa, 2019.
[73] Glenn Osaki, Interview by Diane Matdusa, 2019.
[74] Jerry S. Tondo, Interview by Diane Matdusa, 2019.

One of the most popular events hosted at Kinmon Gakuen during the 1950s and 60s was the screening of Japanese movies, which played in the auditorium every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evening. Movie Night at Kinmon Gakuen "was an eagerly anticipated weekend event in Japantown," which featured "grand samurai epics, melodramatic tear-jerkers, eerie supernatural tales, and comedic stories of everyday Japanese life."[75] Ruby Murakami recalls watching films in the auditorium of the building: "We used to watch movies downstairs. Jidaigeki (old samurai style) types. That was pretty much the entertainment center for all Japanese-Issei, Nisei and young Sansei in the 1950's and '60's."[76] Glenn Osaki described how seeing Japanese people on film impacted him personally: "Then there were the movies. We saw Japanese people on the screen. We never saw any Asians on the screen when we went to movies outside of Japantown. It was great to see that there were movie stars that looked like me."[77]



Posters of Japanese films that were screened at Kinmon Gakuen during its popular Movie Night.
(Japantown History Walk/nddcreative.com)

Robert Sakai, whose family owned a nearby fish market, recalled his experiences at Kinmon Gakuen's Movie Night:

> I think my earliest memory of seeing a movie was in the basement of Kinmon. My father, Tamotsu Sakai, purchased movie tickets sold by the various Japanese churches in Japantown as a fundraiser. Since he was always too busy to see any of them because of the family business, I would walk across the street and watch them by myself. I would sit in the front row and be amongst many Issei who attended these events regularly as it was a great source of enjoyment and entertainment for them where they felt comfortable and could appreciate each other's company.
>
> This all happened in an era when televisions were still not affordable in every household and none of the channels had any Japanese language programs for the Issei to enjoy in their native language.[78]

[75] "Kodomo No Tame Ni/For the Sake of the Children" interpretive display available online at http://www.nddcreative.com/sfjhw/sfjhw_pdf/sfjhw_sign10b.pdf
[76] Ruby Murakami Hata, Interview by Diane Matdusa, 2019.
[77] Glenn Osaki, Interview by Diane Matdusa, 2019.
[78] Robert Sakai, Interview by Diane Matdusa, 2019.

In addition to film screenings, the Kinmon Gakuen auditorium was used for dance or vocal performances and was available for use by members of the community. The resurgence in programing and increased enrollment in the 1950s coincided with a visitation by the Japanese Crown Prince and Princess to Kinmon Gakuen in 1960. Paul Osaki recalled this momentous occasion:

> Over the decades, when important dignitaries from Japan visited SF, they would make their first courtesy visit at Kinmon-that is the level of importance this building had in our community as well as in Japan. The current Emperor Akihito and his wife visited Kinmon when he was still the crown prince and thousands gathered in the street to see them. That was the highlight for many Issei.[79]



Japanese language students pose for a photo, c. 1964 (left), Talent Show at Kinmon Gakuen, c. 1970 (right). (Kinmon Gakuen)

In these ways Kinmon Gakuen was also an important gathering place for Japanese adults and elders. As aptly noted by Robert Sakai:

> Kinmon has served as the main social hub from its inception in 1931 as it was the only place where Japanese people of all generations, faiths, economic status and educational background came together to participate in language, cultural, social and entertainment events. Laws discriminating against Japanese, and the anti-Japanese social and political environment prior to World War II prevented many Japanese, particularly the Issei from venturing out to mainstream establishments for social and cultural activities so their only outlet for entertainment and socialization was at Kinmon.[80]

Beginning in 1977, the auditorium of the Kinmon Gakuen building was leased to Nihonmachi Little Friends (NLF), another important community institution that emerged from Japantown and which provided "culturally sensitive childcare for young children in San Francisco's Japanese community."[81] NLF occupied the space until 2018 when it moved into a new permanent facility in the historic Japanese YWCA on Sutter Street.

Through its myriad of course offerings, community events and programs, and its role as a venue for family and community social events, Kinmon Gakuen played a key role in the rebuilding of San Francisco's Japanese American community in the decades following World War II.

---

[79] Paul Osaki, Interview by Diane Matsuda, 2019.
[80] Robert Sakai, Interview by Diane Matsuda, 2019.
[81] "Nihonmachi Little Friends," accessed February 3, 2019, http://www.nlfchildcare.org/history.

Epilogue

Over 5,000 students have passed through the doors of Kinmon Gakuen throughout its history. In December 2011, Kinmon Gakuen celebrated its 100th anniversary during a gathering at the Hotel Kabuki in Japantown, where dozens of former students, educators, and administrators reflected on the history of the institution and the substantial impact it has made on the community. In attendance were alumni like Emily Murase, the first Japanese American elected to the San Francisco Board of Education and the executive director of the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, and Hiroshi Inomata, the Consul General of Japan in San Francisco, who on behalf of the Japanese government presented Kinmon Gakuen with the Foreign Minister's Commendation. Also present was Hiroshi Karuki, president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California, who noted the important role Kinmon Gakuen played in fostering U.S. – Japan relations.[82]



Students at Kinmon Gakuen participate in a tea ceremony (left) and a mochi-tsuki party (right), 2014. (Kinmon.blogspot.com)

As of the publication of this report in 2019, Kinmon Gakuen operated within one of three surviving Japantowns in the country, down from 43 that had existed prior to the start of World War II and the subsequent mass incarceration of Japanese and Japanese Americans into wartime concentration camps. The Kinmon Gakuen building remains one of four community facilities in San Francisco's Japantown neighborhood that was built through the fundraising efforts of the *Nisei* – the pre-war, second-generation Japanese American community. Kinmon Gakuen continues to offer classes in Japanese language, martial arts, and culture, and is in the process of planning building upgrades to ensure its long-term preservation and use.

[82] Kenji G. Taguma, "Kinmon Gakuen celebrates 100 years of Japanese language instruction," *Nichi Bei Weekly*, *accessed March 2, 2019*, https://www.nichibei.org/2011/12/kinmon-gakuen-celebrates-100-years-of-japanese-language-instruction-2/.

Mediterranean Revival Style and San Francisco School Architecture

The Kinmon Gakuen Building was designed by Bay Area architect and UC Berkeley professor, William C. Hays, in 1926. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Mediterranean Revival style, a popular design aesthetic of the period, particularly for educational facilities in San Francisco during the 1920s and 1930s. Like the Spanish, Colonial, and Mission Revival architectural styles, the Mediterranean Revival was popularized "at world exposition fairs at the turn of the 20th century – the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego in 1915, and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915."[83] By the 1920s, these revival styles were commonly utilized in residential, commercial, and institutional architecture. San Francisco's most prominent school architects of the time —George Applegarth, Arthur Brown, John Bakewell, Jr., John Galen Howard, and John Reid, Jr. — increasingly designed educational buildings in the Mediterranean Revival style.[84]

The Mediterranean Revival style is eclectic and draws from Spanish Renaissance, Spanish Colonial, and Arabic Andalusian style architecture, as well as Beaux-Arts, Italian Renaissance, and Venetian Gothic styles. Buildings designed in this style typically feature red clay tile roofs, stucco siding, arched windows, symmetrical façades, wood or wrought iron balconies, articulated door surrounds, columns, and lush landscaping. Mediterranean Revival style buildings are often only one or two stories in height, feature a low-pitched or flat roof, and sometimes incorporate overhanging eaves. Colors that evoke the Mediterranean, especially blue, white, and terra cotta, are also frequently displayed in buildings of this style, as are mosaic tile, low-relief stonework, and wrought-iron details.



San Francisco's William L. Cobb Elementary School (1926) was designed in the Mediterranean Revival style.
(CSDA Design Group)

In the decades following the 1906 earthquake and fire, which had devastated San Francisco and exposed the weaknesses of earlier school building design, the Mediterranean Revival style was considered "well-suited to the new school design guidelines that required fireproof materials and construction and a building program that integrated indoor and outdoor space planning."[85] Such characteristics include fireproof concrete walls clad in stucco, abundant circulation and use of windows, and the integration of indoor and outdoor spaces. All of these were typical features of the Mediterranean Revival style, which in the 1920s became the second most popular style for the city's school buildings.[86]

The design for the Kinmon Gakuen Building exhibits many Mediterranean Revival characteristics, including its two-story height, clay tile roof, symmetrical front façade, concrete walls with white stucco siding, use of terra cotta and decorative tile, wood and wrought-iron details at the balcony and entrance, its arched entry, and its use of Mediterranean colors of terra cotta, white, and blue.

[83] Sonnier Francisco, "Golden Age of School Construction, San Francisco, California: Historic Context Statement," (San Francisco Planning Department, 2008-2009), 8.
[84] Ibid, 58.
[85] Ibid., 59.
[86] 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 cladding, terra cotta tile coping, multi-lite wood windows, wooden casement windows, paneled doors, wooden wainscoting, painted plaster, and a metal and glazed paneled skylight in the 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 Assessor's Block 0676, Lot 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
- Window openings at the second floor of the interior
- Dogleg, closed string wooden stairs between basement and second floor, and between second and third floors, with railing

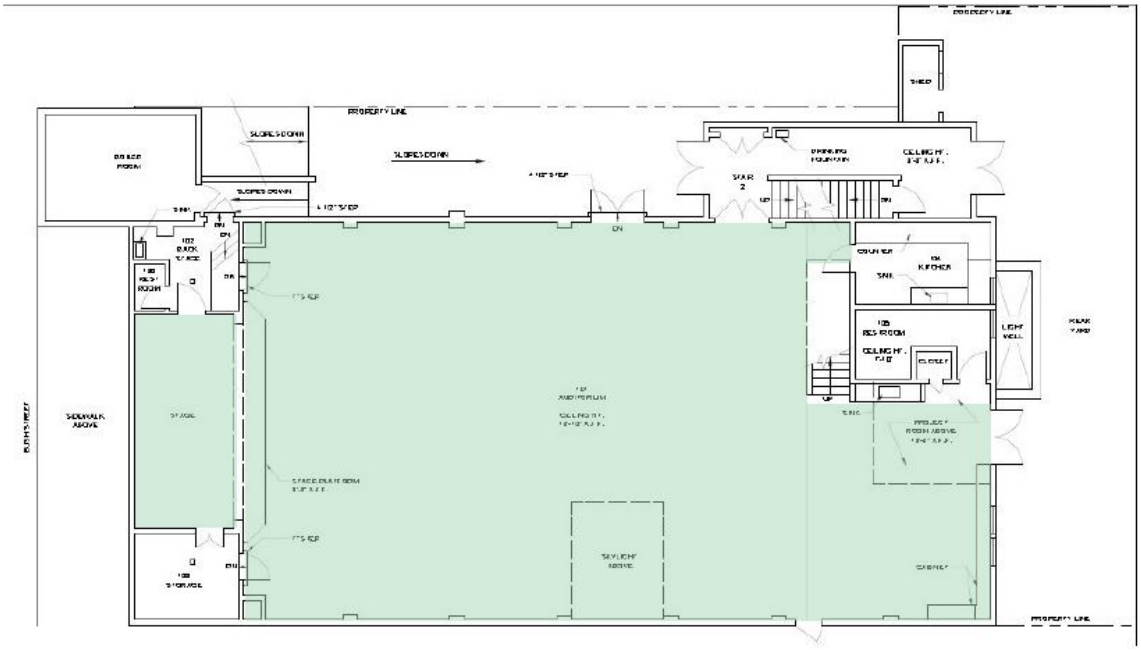
- Light well with hipped roof and skylights

Auditorium

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

Significance Diagrams[87]

Ground Floor (Auditorium)



Second Floor



[87] Base drawings courtesy of Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company.

Third Floor


DRINKING FOUNTAIN
PORTABLE HEATER
STAIR
CLASSROOM
CABINET
PLATFORM
BUILT-IN CHALKBOARD
ELECTRICAL BOX
BALCONY
HALL
CEILING HEATER
SINK
SKYLIGHT ABOVE
COUNTER
KITCHEN
WATER HEATER
WASHROOM
OPEN TO BELOW
WOMENS
ACCESS HATCH ABOVE
MENS
FIRE ESCAPE

Photographs[88]



Primary elevation, view southwest.



Front façade, view southeast.

[88] All photographs courtesy of Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company.



One of two interpretive displays produced by the Japanese Cultural & community Center of Northern California, located at the front exterior wall of the entry stairs, view south.



Terra cotta tile at the water table located at the second story of the entry stair, view west.



Main entrance, view southwest.



Detail at front façade, view southwest.



Japanese sign reading “Kinmon Gakuen” to left of main entry door, view south.

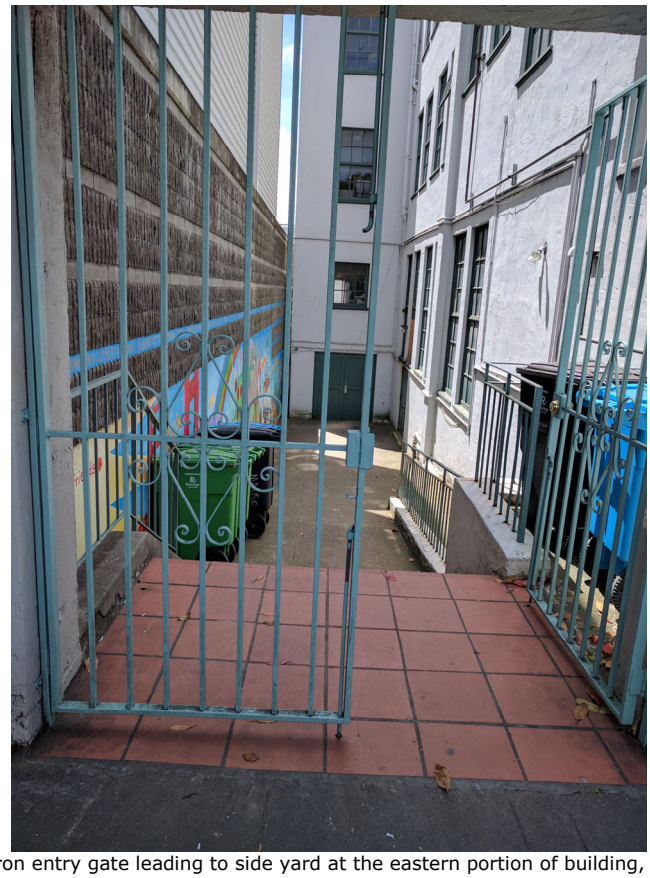

Detail of red clay tile coping at roof, view east..



Entry stairs and entrance to side yard, view east.



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



Wrought-iron entry gate leading to side yard at the eastern portion of building, view south.



East elevation, view southeast.



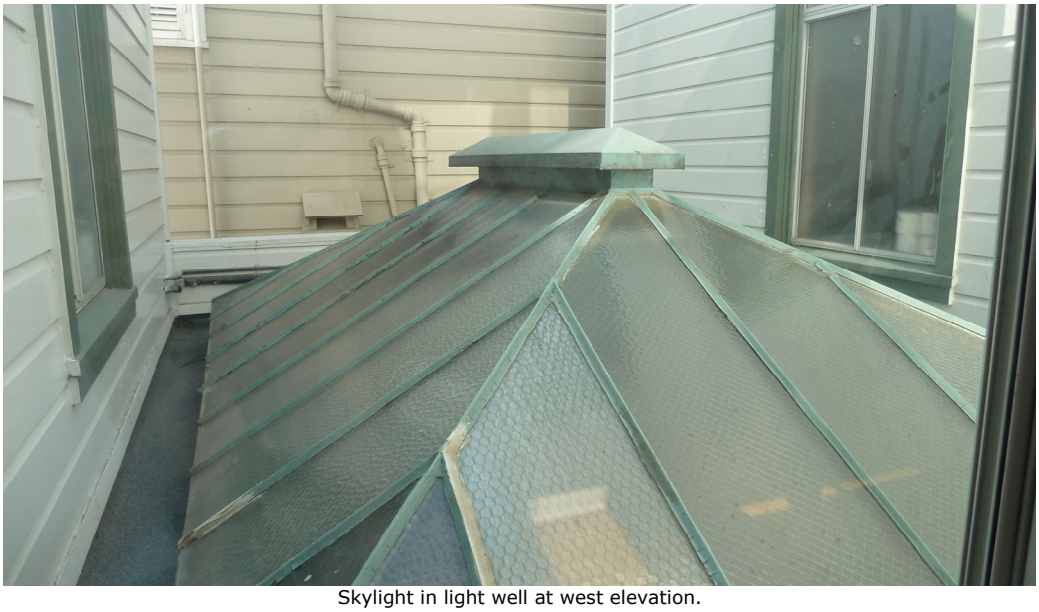
Light well at west elevation.



Light well at west elevation with view of skylight.



Skylight in light well at west elevation.



Skylight in light well at west elevation.



Double-loaded corridor at the interior.



Another double loaded corridor at the interior.



Classroom door.


Dogleg, closed string wooden stairs with railing.



Third floor classroom at north end of building.



Entrance to classroom at north end of third floor.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books & Reports

Asato, Noriko. *Teaching Mikadoism: The Attack on Japanese Language Schools in Hawaii, California, and Washington, 1919-1927*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

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

Cary and Co. *Building Evaluation/ Feasibility Study Kinmon Gakuen 2031 Bush Street,* San Francisco: 2018.

Francisco, Sonnier. *Golden Age of School Construction, San Francisco, California: Historic Context Statement.* San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2008-2009.

Fujie, Ron. *The Preservation of the Japanese Heritage: A History of Japanese Language Schools in California and the Life of Koshi Suzuki.* San Francisco: Kinmon Gakuen archives, n.d.

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

Ichioka, Yuji. *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924.* New York: The Free Press, 1998.

Japantown Task Force, Inc*. Images of America, San Francisco's Japantown, 2005*.

Kshetry, Gopal. *Foreigners in Japan: A Historical Perspective*. Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2008.

Kinmon Gakuen. "History of the Golden Gate Institute: 100th Anniversary: Golden Gate Institute Japanese Language and Cultural School 1911-2011." San Francisco: Kinmon Gakuen, 2011.

Kiyama, Henry. *The Four Immigrants Magna.* Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1931.

Lee, Erica. *The Making of Asian America: A History.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016.

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

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

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

Wang, ShiPu. *The Other American Moderns: Matsura, Ishigaki, Noda, Hayakawa.* Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2017.

Newspapers & Periodicals

HarpWeek

New York Times

Nichi Bei Weekly

San Francisco Chronicle

Public Records

San Francisco's Assessor Recorder's Office Records.

San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, Building Permit Records.

Websites

Bell, Shelley Bradford. "Legacy of Victory: History of the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center, 1920 through the 1970s" (Booker T. Washington Community Services Center, n.d.). Accessed December 20, 2018, http://btwcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/A-Legacy-of-Victory-History-of-the-BTWCSC-2.pdf.

California Japantowns. "Kinmon Gakuen 2031 Bush Street." Accessed January 22, 2019. http://www.californiajapantowns.org/sf/kinmongakuen.html

Densho. "Evacuation or Exclusion? Japanese Americans Exiled." Discover Nikkei. Accessed December 23, 2019. http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2011/2/22/evacuation-or-exclusion/.

Densho Digital Repository "Anti-Immigration Sentiment" Accessed January 23, 2019. http://ddr.densho.org/

Kennedy, Robert C. "On This Day." *New York Times* Archives. Accessed January 22, 2019. https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/harp/1110.html#explanation

Kinmon Gakuen. "About Kinmon Gakuen." Accessed January 22, 2019. http://www.kinmongakuen.com

"Kodomo No Tame Ni/For the Sake of the Children." Interpretive display available online. Accessed March 13, 2019. http://www.nddcreative.com/sfjhw/sfjhw_pdf/sfjhw_sign10b.pdf

Nihonmachi Little Friends. "Nihonmachi Little Friends." Accessed February 3, 2019. http://www.nlfchildcare.org/history.

Office of the Historian. "The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)." Accessed January 22, 2019. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act

Rumsey, David. "San Francisco Aerial Photographs 1938." David Rumsey Map Collection. Accessed January 22, 2019. https://www.davidrumsey.com/blog/2011/10/24/san-francisco-aerial-photographs-1938.

United States Department of State, Office of the Historian. "The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)." Accessed January 22, 2019. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act.

Wada, Yori. Oral history transcript by Gabrielle Morris. "Working for youth and social justice: the YMCA, the University of California, and the Stulsaft Foundation: oral history transcript for Yori Wada." Berkeley: Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office. Accessed March 26, 2019. "https://oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb7r29p1vn;NAAN=13030&doc.view=frames&chunk.id=div00039&toc.depth=1&toc.id=div00038&brand=oac4&query=booker.

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

Wong, Yen-Mei. "Generations: A Japanese American Community Portrait "Accessed January 22, 2019. https://web.archive.org/web/20080513043414/http://www.jcccnc.org/default.htm.

Oral History Interviews

Hata, Ruby Murakami. Oral history interview by Diane Matsuda. "Kinmon Gakuen Oral History Project." San Francisco, 2019.

Osaki, Glenn. Oral history interview by Diane Matsuda. "Kinmon Gakuen Oral History Project." San Francisco, 2019.

Osaki, Paul. Oral history interview by Diane Matsuda. "Kinmon Gakuen Oral History Project." San Francisco, 2019.

Sakai, Robert S. Oral history interview by Diane Matsuda. "Kinmon Gakuen Oral History Project." San Francisco, 2019.

Tondo, Jerry S. Oral history interview by Diane Matsuda. "Kinmon Gakuen Oral History Project." San Francisco, 2019.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

San Francisco City and County
London Breed, Mayor
Vallie Brown, District 5 Supervisor
Aaron Peskin, District 2 Supervisor

Historic Preservation Commissioners
Aaron John Hyland
Diane Matsuda
Kate Black
Ellen Johnck
Richard S.E. Johns
Jonathan Pearlman
Andrew Wolfram

Planning Department
John Rahaim, Director
Tim Frye, Historic Preservation Officer

Project Staff
Desiree Smith, Department Preservation Planner, research and writing
Elizabeth Munyan, Department Preservation Intern, research and writing

Additional Support:
Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company
Richard Hashimoto
Diane Matsuda
Ruby Murakami Hata
Glenn Osaki
Paul Osaki
Robert Sakai
Jerry S. Tondo

Photography
Carey & Co., A TreanorHL Company
Desiree Smith

APPENDIX: ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Kinmon Gakuen Oral History Project

Oral history of Glenn Osaki
Age: 60
Grandson of Tomi Osaki
Attended Kinmon Gakuen from 1964-68

Interviewed by Diane Matsuda
San Francisco, Spring 2019

My first memory of Kinmon was crying on the first day I attended. I did not want to be there because it was a Saturday morning and I was missing my cartoons on TV. I also had to go by myself. None of my other brothers were told they had to go. I did not know anyone in my class.

I did learn something from Kinmon. I can still read and write hiragana today and do remember writing kanji with a calligraphy brush. I used to be able to count to 100 and did write some kanji. I am not sure if I can do that now but I may be able to if I had to. Learning a foreign language was not bad. I also think I learned because I had a good teacher. I still remember her name today. It was Kanemori Sensei. I understand that she is still living in the area. She was very nice and knew that I did not know any Japanese so she was patient.

Recess was a favorite time for me because we could walk down to American Fish and buy snacks. I remember buying mui (salted plum) for 5 cents.

Then there were the movies. We saw Japanese people on the screen. We never saw any Asians on the screen when we went to movies outside of Japantown. It was great to see that there were movie stars that looked like me.

I also remember one song we were taught to memorize. It is about pidgeons crying. Po po po. Hato po po. Yes, I still remember it today.

Initially I was much more comfortable at my regular school. I went to school in the Sunset District where there were very few Japanese students but after hanging around with the Japanese American students at Kinmon, I enjoyed being around them more because it was comfortable and familiar. We were taught things at home dealing with our culture, manners, food that my white friends did not understand.

Kinmon introduced me to my culture. I became more proud of being Japanese and identified with being Japanese. I remember being called a very racist word at school and was beat up by white kids because of my race so to have a safe place and group who understood what I was going through was great.

I know that my grandmother had to do many things to keep the school running and up to capacity. She was honored by the Emperor twice (she received two Kunsho Awards) for her work to reestablish Kinmon after the War and make it into a quality educational institution. That is a sense of pride for our family. People used to say that my father spoke Japanese just like a native using polite Japanese, unlike the words we tried to put together to make a conversation. Too bad we did not learn more.

The building of Kinmon has a great layout. They had a theater; classrooms; a kitchen and everything you needed to be a community venue. I am glad that it is being honored and preserved. So many of us utilized that facility and it is an integral part of our Japanese American history.

I know that before World War II (everything is usually split up into "pre-war" or "post-war" in the JA community because of the incarceration), many Nisei attended Kinmon after school and that benefitted the country as a whole as they used their skills to help the US as interpreters during the war and during the Occupation of Japan. I think many MIS (Military Intelligence Service) officers got their foundational Japanese from Kinmon. That is not discussed very often. This should be publicized more as it illustrates how Kinmon has had an impact on the US as a whole.

It should also be known that Kinmon was the official gathering place for Issei and Nisei before they were removed to Detention Centers. SF Japanese Americans went to the Tanforan Race Track where they lived in horse stables. They were forced to leave their homes and businesses and everything they had established just because of their race. Talk about injustice.

I am very proud that Kinmon will be honored during my lifetime. I wish it would have been further recognized by the American people during my grandmother's lifetime so that she could see the impact that she left on hundreds of people. Nonetheless, it is good that this is happening as many people need to know about the contributions that Kinmon has made and continues to make.

Kinmon Gakuen Oral History Project

Oral History of Paul Osaki
Age 58
Attended Kinmon Gakuen from 1965-1968
(Kindergarten through 3rd grade)

Interviewed by Diane Matsuda
San Francisco, Spring 2019

My grandmother, Tomi Osaki, was the Principal of Kinmon Gakuen for several decades. My parents thought it would be good for my brother and me to start learning Japanese so they enrolled us at Kinmon. I am sure that was something my grandmother wanted as well as her primary language was Japanese and this would be a way that we would better communicate with her.

Glenn, my older brother went first and then I was enrolled one year later.

I remember being dropped off with my brother and going to my grandmother's office. My grandmother told me what class to go to. I assumed that Glenn and I were going to go to the same class, but we were placed in different classes. I was really scared because I did not know anyone in the class and so I sat in the back of the class in one of those rickety school chairs with an inkwell. I remember seeing many names and words carved into the desk-I guess there were other people like me who did not want to be there and expressed their frustration by defacing the property.

When the teacher asked each of us to say our names in Japanese, I froze. I did not know how to do this. We all had to stand up one by one and do this. When it was my turn, I stood up and cried. The teacher then walked me down to the Principal's office (my grandmother's office) for the rest of the class and I just sat there until my parents picked me up. I did not want to go back but I was made to go the next week.

We initially went to Japanese school on Saturdays but then it increased to a daily thing after we went to regular school. That is because my dad worked in the area so it was easy for us to go to his office after school. There were not as many students during the weekday and there was no recess break so I resented it more than the Saturday deal.

I did try to learn. I tried to memorize the Japanese alphabet and write my name but I was not very good at it. Then I remember there were yearly events at the end of the school year where all of us had to participate in our class program. If we did well, we were asked to advance to a different class. I never improved so I stayed in the same classroom throughout my time there.

The best thing about Japanese school was the recess. It was fun because I was able to hang out with Japanese American friends that I knew from church. We used to play tag in the hallway; make paper airplanes and then fly them off the fire escape.

It was also my first exposure hanging out with Japanese American youth who were outside of my church circle. Even though many of us did not excel in the language, we did learn about Japanese culture through the calligraphy lessons we were forced to take; seeing the kanji being written on the board and singing Japanese songs. There were even Japanese movies that were shown on the weekends. Those

movies depicted characters that looked like me-unlike the western movies that I saw where everyone was white.

Looking back, I regret that I did not take the lessons more seriously but there were many students like me who did not see the immediate reason of why learning the Japanese language was so important. For those of us who did not live with our Issei grandparents, there was never an opportunity to use the language outside of school. I went to school in an era when there was still a lot of racism against Japanese people so I never told my white friends that I went to Japanese school for fear that they would make fun of me or even beat me up.

Kinmon Gakuen gave students a holistic introduction to Japanese culture. Of course language was of primary concern but students also learned about other things such as how to bow; how to address teachers or those who you were to show great respect; the centuries old way of writing with a brush and making your own ink; seeing people on the movie screen that looked like you-we never saw that in mainstream cinemas.

In short, it gave us a sense of pride of our ethnic heritage. Racism was still very, very strong and Nisei parents did not want their children to suffer the same fears and hate they went through but yet felt that they needed to know something about their cultural heritage. There were also no alternatives as there are now such as afterschool programs or other culturally or educationally based programs that parents could send their children to that were affordable.

The Kinmon experience also gave me a sense of respect for my grandmother who was charged to build up the attendance of students after World War II. Back then, very few women made it to the level of being a Principal, particularly in Japanese hierarchal circles. She even received two Kunsho Awards of the highest rank-that is something that very few people, even today, are awarded. (Award from the Emperor of Japan for strengthening US-Japan ties and providing a benefit to your community)

Over the decades, when important dignitaries from Japan visited SF, they would make their first courtesy visit at Kinmon-that is the level of importance this building had in our community as well as in Japan.

The current Emperor Akihito and his wife visited Kinmon when he was still the crown prince and thousands gathered in the street to see them. That was the highlight for many Issei.

Kinmon still exists today as a cultural institution. They are one of three Japanese language schools still in existence (the others are in Castroville, CA and Seattle, WA) and they continue to offer language classes and martial arts.

Finally, I would have to say that the influence of Kinmon led me to the direction of getting involved in the Japanese American community. Kinmon was a gathering place for both Nisei prior to World War II and Sansei where culture was learned and when there was no other institution who would teach and house those services. Now there is JCCCNC where I have been the Executive Director for over 30 years. JCCCNC was never meant to replace Kinmon as both facilities are needed to preserve, promote and protect our cultural resources and share this knowledge to those who are not of Japanese heritage. I am very happy and proud to learn that Kinmon is being considered for landmark designation by the City and County of SF as it holds a special place in the minds and hearts of many Japanese Americans who grew up in SF and has a history that should not be dismissed or forgotten. I know that my grandmother

would be very happy to finally see recognition of a building she fought to hard to promote, protect and leave as a legacy for us all.

Kinmon Gakuen Oral History Project

Oral History of Ruby Murakami Hata
Age: 66
Born and raised Sacramento and Locust Street, San Francisco, CA

Interviewed by Diane Matsuda
San Francisco, Spring 2019

I went to Kinmon Gakuen for 8 years, starting from the first through the 9th grade.

I went daily after regular school. First when I was a primary school student at Claire Lilienthal and then when I went to Roosevelt Middle School.

I did not go to Kinmon by choice. My mother insisted that I attend but I did receive very good grades throughout my time there. It was the only time that I came home with "A's" on my report card.

When I was young, there were not too many activities that young people who didn't have a lot of money could do after school and during the summer so I went to Japanese school.

I do not really remember what I learned there but I do remember looking forward to buying snacks at the corner store during recess.

There were four classrooms at Kinmon. I was in Abe Sensei's class. A little above beginner level. We used to read to the teacher and copy the book we were assigned. We had calligraphy too. I think we had to say speeches too and sing Japanese songs.

The building looks the same now as it did when I went to school there and the desks are so old that they even had inkwells.

Kinmon was one place that I was able to see other Japanese Americans. My primary school was all white. It was the only place that I was able to interact with other Asians so it made me feel more comfortable as I always felt out of place with all of the rich white kids.

I would take the bus by myself to Jtown to go to Kinmon, and after class let out, I would catch the bus and go home. It was just something we did. No one was picked up by a car.

I went to school with George Okamoto and I used to help him. I used to nod and give him the answers. I always wanted to be in Osaki Sensei's class but never got to.

We used to watch movies downstairs. Jidaigeki (old samurai style) types.
That was pretty much the entertainment center for all Japanese-Issei, Nisei and young Sansei in the 1950's and '60's.

It is too bad that such places no longer exist.

Kinmon Gakuen Oral History Project

Oral History of Robert K. Sakai
Age: 68
Years at Kinmon 5-6 through various activities

Interviewed by Diane Matsuda
San Francisco, Spring 2019

I was born and raised in a house right across the street from Kinmon. The address was 2056 Bush Street, and I lived there until middle school. I remember seeing a lot of activity at Kinmon. There were always people around. Students attending language school during the weekday; people lining up for movies on the weekend, and other activities including social events and other classes. It was an actively used building.

My family owned a market called Uoki Sakai selling fresh fish and other Japanese products. It was started by my paternal grandfather at the turn of the 20th century and he moved the business to Japantown after the 1906 earthquake. Therefore, my family was very familiar with the creation of Kinmon and supported many activities there. The business closed in 2012 and there were four generations of Sakai family members who worked there throughout its 100+ year history.

I think my earliest memory of seeing a movie was in the basement of Kinmon. My father, Tamotsu Sakai, purchased movie tickets sold by the various Japanese churches in Japantown as a fundraiser. Since he was always too busy to see any of them because of the family business, I would walk across the street and watch them by myself. I would sit in the front row and be amongst many Issei who attended these events regularly as it was a great source of enjoyment and entertainment for them where they felt comfortable and could appreciate each other's company.

This all happened in an era when televisions were still not affordable in every household and none of the channels had any Japanese language programs for the Issei to enjoy in their native language.

Kinmon has served as the main social hub from its inception in 1931 as it was the only place where Japanese people of all generations, faiths, economic status and educational background came together to participate in language, cultural, social and entertainment events. Laws discriminating against Japanese, and the anti-Japanese social and political environment prior to World War II prevented many Japanese, particularly the Issei from venturing out to mainstream establishments for social and cultural activities so their only outlet for entertainment and socialization was at Kinmon.

Kinmon was also a place where I took Judo lessons. I still remember the name of my teacher: Kimura Sensei. That was over 50 years ago. I believe I took Judo for about 5-6 years in primary school. The classes were held in the same area where movies were shown and we had to be very careful in taking out and putting back the mats that we used to practice on. Judo is more than a sport. It really taught me many other things as well. I think I learned the foundation of respect by participating in the judo lessons as you must always bow to show appreciation to your Sensei (teacher), your opponent, your school and to yourself. This practice has really guided me throughout my life.

There were other practical aspects of Judo that helped me too. When I was a young kid, I remember falling backward while trying to help my father at the store pull in one of the heavy fish boxes. Instead of falling back and hitting my head, I was automatically able to roll and land on my feet.
Also, because I had some knowledge of Judo in my youth, I was able to participate in Judo classes while studying abroad in Japan in college and received my shodan (first degree black belt). That was an accomplishment that I would not have been able to do without my early foundation at Kinmon.

Also, because of my participation with the Boy Scout Troop 12, we were assigned to volunteer our time to help set up and take down chairs and get the Kinmon hall ready for other activities. This was a regular activity and because of this, my friends and I got to know the facility very well. It is a cool building as it serves so many practical needs. I hope that it can be reused and reappreciated again with the assistance of the landmark designation status from the City.

Last, Kinmon served as the official assembly point in 1942 when Japanese residents of all generations in SF were forced to leave their homes and be sent to Detention Centers and Concentration Camps. I think Kinmon was selected to be the point of assembly because everyone in the community was familiar with its location. That in and of itself should be one of the main reasons why the building should be recognized by the City as it was one of the nadir moments in US history. By highlighting this history, it is hoped that such unjustified and unconstitutional acts will never happen again.

Kinmon Gakuen Oral History Project

Oral History of Jerry S. Tondo
Age: 68
Attended Kinmon Gakuen from age 7-13

Interviewed by Diane Matsuda
San Francisco, Spring 2019

I am the second generation of the Tondo family to go to Kinmon. My father, Joe Tondo, was born right around the corner on Webster Street from Kinmon and I was born in Japantown as well. Even though he attended in the pre-war era, and me in the 1960's, we did have something in common: neither of us were stellar students.

We did, however, know every nook and cranny of the building because we both explored all of the classrooms, the hallways, the hall where movies were sponsored and back yard during school hours and we both suffered the penalty of discipline for doing that.

My father used to tell me that the building had not changed since he attended school there in the 1930's. That was what was so special about Kinmon-having the assurance that the succeeding generations of Japanese Americans would have a place to attend to learn not only the language but other important Japanese cultural aspects such as respect (learning how to bow); learning Japanese songs; acting in annual performances; learning things by rote memorization and just being around teachers from Japan to observe their mannerisms and expressions.

It was a school where you did not have to explain to your classmates what an onigiri (rice ball) was or what you were doing on New Years or having people around you thinking it was strange to eat tofu and raw fish. We were all Japanese Americans sent to learn about our cultural heritage. That commonality allowed us to create life long friendships that continue until this day.

Two of my friends from the Kinmon Gakuen days - Robert Sakai and Sterling Sakai who still remain my best friends – and I remember setting up very stiff wooden chairs on the weekends for the Issei to sit and watch old style samurai movies. We were part of a Boy Scout Troop where we were required to do this as our community service. We didn't really mind because the movies were pretty good. We also had our Judo lessons in the same spot during the weekday.

The hall at Kinmon was truly multi-purpose and was available to anyone, irrespective of your religion, economic status or profession. Everyone used it for their own purpose. It was a place where families gathered on the weekend to watch movies or dance performances or traditional singing. A very family oriented venue.

It also was a place where you learned to appreciate your Japanese heritage. This was really important during the era when there was so much anti-Japanese sentiment before WWII and immediately after. Japanese families were not wanted back in Japantown but we were fortunate that the Booker T. Washington Center utilized the facility during the War and kept it from being vandalized. I think that is also the reason why the African American and Japanese American communities have always been close and supportive of one another through all of the challenges faced then and even now.

I am glad that there is consideration by the City to make this a landmark designation. It deserves its place in SF history-right alongside the famous affluent houses of Pacific Heights as its history, importance to the community and the intangible memories are irreplaceable.