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[Planning Code - Landmark Designation - 200 Rhode Island Street (aka Takahashi Trading Company)]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate 200 Rhode Island Street (aka Takahashi Trading Company), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3936, Lot No. 001, as a Landmark consistent with the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

> 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 Planning Code amendment proposed in this ordinance is subject to a Categorical Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seg., "CEQA") pursuant to Section 15308 of California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15000 et seq., 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. 220507 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 200 Rhode Island Street (Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3936, Lot No. 001 (aka Takahashi Trading Company) ("200 Rhode Island Street"), will serve the public necessity, convenience, and welfare for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 1226, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated herein by reference.
- (3) The Board of Supervisors finds that the proposed landmark designation of 200 Rhode Island Street is consistent with the General Plan and with Planning Code Section 101.1(b) for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 1226.

(b) General Findings.

- (1) Pursuant to Charter Section 4.135, 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) The Landmark Designation Fact Sheet was prepared by Planning
 Department Preservation staff. All preparers meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional
 Qualification Standards for historic preservation program staff, as set forth in Code of Federal
 Regulations Title 36, Part 61, Appendix A. The report was reviewed for accuracy and
 conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10 of the Planning Code.
- (3) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of February 16, 2022, reviewed Planning Department staff's analysis of the historical significance of 200 Rhode Island Street set forth in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated February 16, 2022.

- (4) On November 17, 2021, after holding a public hearing on the proposed initiation, the Historic Preservation Commission initiated the proposed landmark designation of 200 Rhode Island Street by Resolution No. 1213. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board in File No. 220507.
- (5) On February 16, 2022, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning Department staff and the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended designation of 200 Rhode Island Street as a landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code by Resolution No. 1226. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board in File No. 220507.
- (6) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the 200 Rhode Island Street Street 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. In doing so, the Board hereby incorporates by reference the findings of the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet.

Section 2. Designation.

Pursuant to Section 1004 of the Planning Code, 200 Rhode Island Street, Assessor's Block No. 3936, Lot No. 001 (aka Takahashi Trading Company), is hereby designated as a San Francisco Landmark consistent with the standards set forth in Section 1004. Appendix A to Article 10 of the Planning Code is hereby amended to include this property.

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Section 3. Required Data.

- (a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the City parcel located at 200 Rhode Island Street (Takahashi Trading Company), Assessor's Block No. 3936, Lot No. 001, in San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood.
- (b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and shown in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet and other supporting materials contained in Planning Department Record Docket No. 2021-007060DES. In brief, 200 Rhode Island Street is eligible for local designation as it is associated with events that have made a culturally and historically significant contribution to the broad patterns of San Francisco history and with persons significant to San Francisco history. Specifically, designation of 200 Rhode Island Street is proper given its association with Japanese American history and culture in San Francisco. Specifically, for over 50 years, circa 1965-2019, the venue served as the headquarters of the Takahashi Trading Company, which imported high-caliber home goods from Japan for Takahashi retail stores in the Bay Area and New York City. The Takahashi family acquired the property after their original Japantown shop was demolished due to a San Francisco Redevelopment Agency program; thus, the building has an association with the hardships faced by Japanese Americans who were forcibly displaced from Japantown due to redevelopment. The building also served as the headquarters of the Henri & Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation, which was established in 1986 to support the Japanese American community through cultural and educational projects. Furthermore, the original 1912 portion of the building is significant as an early distinctive project of famed San Francisco master architect Gustave Albert Lansburgh. The property lies within the Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel Frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District, which is eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources as San Francisco's most important concentration of large heavy timber and steel-frame American Commercial Style industrial buildings.

(c) The particular features that should be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined
necessary, are those generally shown in photographs and described in the Landmark
Designation Fact Sheet, which can be found in Planning Department Record Docket No.
2021-007060DES, and which are incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully
set forth. Specifically, all those physical and spatial features which define the historic
character of the building should be preserved or replaced in-kind, including:

- (A) Integrated plan of the original building and subsequent additions.
- (A) Heavy timber frame;
- (B) Five-story height;
- (C) Irregular plan conforming to the triangular parcel;
- (E) Red brick cladding laid in English bond pattern;
- (F) Brick belt courses separating the first and second and fourth and fifth
 - (G) Shallow pilasters with diamond-shaped wall anchor plates;
 - (H) Fenestration with alternating columns of window types;
 - (I) Brick window surrounds with terra cotta keystones and springers;
 - (J) Yellow brick window sills;
- (K) Yellow brickwork laid in a diamond-shaped pattern at the fifth story of
 - (L) "Takahashi" signage, including metal lettering and painted brick.

(B) Irregular plan conforming to the triangular parcel;
(C) Flat roof;
(D) Boxy shape and massing;
(E) Exposed aggregate concrete walls;
(F) Shallow relief pilasters constructed of smooth concrete;
(G) Narrow, metal-sash windows across both stories;
(H) Overall austerity and lack of adornment; and
(I) Painted "Takahashi" signage on the transom window on the east
façade and on a wood panel affixed to the north façade.
(4) 1976 Brick Addition
(A) Three-story height;
(B) Rectangular plan;
(C) Flat roof;
(D) Brick veneer cladding laid in running bond pattern;
(E) Decorative brickwork cornice;
(F) North facing concrete belt course with "Takahashi" signage
separating the first and second stories;
(G) Fenestration including segmental arched, industrial windows at the
third story; and
(H) Height and width of the area at first floor of the east façade reflecting
the historic location and dimensions of original loading dock.
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

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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:

DAVID CHIU, City Attorney

By: /s/ Victoria Wong

VICTORIA WONG Deputy City Attorney

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City and County of San Francisco Tails

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

Ordinance

File Number: 220507

Date Passed: September 13, 2022

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate 200 Rhode Island Street (aka Takahashi Trading Company), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3936, Lot No. 001, as a Landmark consistent with the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

July 25, 2022 Land Use and Transportation Committee - RECOMMENDED

September 06, 2022 Board of Supervisors - PASSED ON FIRST READING

Ayes: 11 - Chan, Dorsey, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

September 13, 2022 Board of Supervisors - FINALLY PASSED

Ayes: 11 - Chan, Dorsey, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

File No. 220507

I hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance was FINALLY PASSED on 9/13/2022 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

> Angela Calvillo Clerk of the Board

London N. Breed Mayor

Date Approved



ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

FACT SHEET

Historic Name:	Takahashi Trading Company
	Takahashi Trading Company
Address:	200 Rhode Island Street
Block/ Lot(s):	3936/001
Parcel Area:	29,093 sq ft
Zoning:	PDR-1-D - PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION & REPAIR - 1 - DESIGN
Year Built:	1912
Architect:	G. Albert Lansburgh
Prior Historic Studies/Other Designations:	 1976 Department of City Planning Survey – 3 Rating (of 0-5) 1978 Foundation for San Francisco Architectural Heritage Survey – B Rating (Major Importance) 2011 Showplace Square / Northeast Mission Historic Resource Survey – appears eligible for CA Register both individually and as a contributor to a CA Register eligible district 2020 SF Planning Department Historic Resource Evaluation Response Part 2
Prior HPC Actions:	On September 1, 2021, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) added the Takahashi Trading Company to the Landmark Designation Work Program On November 17, 2021, the HPC initiated landmark designation of the Takahashi Trading Company.
Significance Criteria:	Events: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Persons: Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. Architecture/Design: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and/or represents the work of a master.
Periods of Significance:	1912, 1965-2019
Statement of Significance:	The Takahashi Trading Company is significant for its association with San Francisco's Japanese-American community. Prominent Japanese-American entrepreneurs and philanthropists Henri and Tomoye Takahashi owned the subject property from 1965 to 2019. Shortly after returning to San Francisco after being interned at the Topaz War Relocation Center during World War II, the couple established the original Takahashi Trading Company in Japantown. However, their building was demolished in 1961 as part of the

City's redevelopment efforts, leading them to purchase 200 Rhode Island Street. The subject property served as headquarters for the Takahashi Trading Company which imported high-quality products from Japan including porcelain, pottery, furniture, folding screens, and other goods for sale at several retail stores located in San Francisco as well as in Sausalito and New York City. In 1985 the Takahashis, along with Tomoye's sister Masako Martha Suzuki, established the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation, also headquartered at the subject property. The Foundation supported a variety of cultural organizations including the Japanese Wing of the San Francisco Asian Art Museum, Morikami Museum in Florida, Nichi Bei Weekly, documentary films featured on PBS, Cherry Blossom Festival, Stanford University curriculum, and the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California.

The subject property is also significant for its architecture and design as an intact early example of the work of G. Albert Lansburgh. Specifically, the original 1912 heavy timber-frame and brick warehouse constitutes an early and distinctive project in the career of this architect, who was highly regarded as a designer of theaters in the early twentieth-century. This light industrial brick building that he designed early in his career is one of his few known warehouses.

Assessment of Integrity:

The Takahashi Trading Company maintains a high level of integrity. The seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service (NPS) and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.¹

The building remains in its original location and has been maintained over time. Changes to the 1912 structure have been fairly minor and include the replacement of fenestration on the first story of the north façade and east and south annexes which block lower portions of the respective facades. The additions have not been significantly altered. Plans were approved in 2021 with some changes to support proposed new building programming including a storefront addition where the loading dock currently is and fenestration changes on the southeast addition façade. Planning Department Preservation Staff found these changes to be categorically exempt under the CA Environmental Quality Act².

Character-Defining Features:

General:

• Integrated plan of the original building and subsequent additions.

1912 Building:

- Heavy timber frame;
- Five-story height;
- Irregular plan conforming to the triangular parcel;
- Flat roof;

² Case Number 2019-019531PRJ



¹ "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," National Register Bulletin, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995, p. 44

- Red brick cladding laid in English bond pattern;
- Brick belt courses separating the first and second and fourth and fifth stories;
- Shallow pilasters with diamond-shaped wall anchor plates;
- Fenestration with alternating columns of window types;
- Brick window surrounds with terra cotta keystones and springers;
- Yellow brick window sills;
- Yellow brickwork laid in a diamond-shaped pattern at the fifth story of the west façade; and
- "Takahashi" signage, including metal lettering and painted brick.

1968 Concrete Tilt-Up Addition:

- Two-story height;
- Irregular plan conforming to the triangular parcel;
- Flat roof;
- Boxy shape and massing;
- Exposed aggregate concrete walls;
- Shallow relief pilasters constructed of smooth concrete;
- Narrow, metal-sash windows across both stories;
- Overall austerity and lack of adornment; and
- Painted "Takahashi" signage on the transom window on the east façade and on a wood panel affixed to the north façade.

1976 Brick Addition:

- Three-story height;
- Rectangular plan;
- Flat roof;
- Brick veneer cladding laid in running bond pattern;
- Decorative brickwork cornice;
- North facing concrete belt course with "Takahashi" signage separating the first and second stories;
- Fenestration including segmental arched, industrial windows at the third story; and
- Height and width of the area at first floor of the east façade reflecting the historic location and dimensions of original loading dock.

Statement of Significance Summary

The Takahashi Trading Company at 200 Rhode Island Street is significant for its association with prominent Japanese American entrepreneurs and philanthropists Henri and Tomoye Takahashi who owned the subject property from 1965 to 2019. Henri, born in 1914, immigrated from Tokyo with his parents at the age of three³; and Tomoye, born in San Francisco in 1915, was the daughter of a successful Japantown businessman who owned the Starlight Laundry and part-owner of the Nichi Bei Bank and Nichi Bei Securities Company.⁴ They met in San Francisco in 1938, got married in 1941, and shortly after were forcibly relocated to the concentration camp in Topaz, Utah following the bombing of Pearl Harbor during World War II. Upon their return to San Francisco in 1945,

⁴ "Philanthropist Tomoye Takahashi Dies at 100", Discover Nikkei, June 16, 2016



³ "Henri Takahashi", San Francisco Chronicle, April 19, 2002

the couple opened the original Takahashi Trading Company on Post Street in Japantown, originally selling sundries.⁵ Additionally, the family made strong commitments to assist local Japanese Americans with sending money, food, and clothing to relatives in war torn Japan. During this time, many Issei (first generation Japanese Americans), were interested in helping relatives living in Japan with recovery efforts, though language barriers and logistical challenges made this difficult. Thus, to aid the community over a ten year span the Takahashis shipped several thousand care packages to Japan to provide emergency supplies to family members of Isseis who were facing starvation and other threats.⁶ The company also began importing goods from Japan such as toys for young children, including kami fusen (paper balloons), kendama (a wood skill toy), and origami. Objectives of the activities included both assisting with post-war economic recovery of Japan, as well as introducing Japanese products to children of different races at young ages to help build race relations.⁷ However, the Post Street shop was demolished in 1961 as a part of San Francisco's large-scale urban renewal efforts, thus displacing the business. This initiative was amongst the first federally funded urban renewal projects in the nation, and cleared vast swaths of the Western Addition, including much of Japantown, for new development in the late 1950s and early 1960s, thus displacing thousands of residents and numerous businesses. The hardships faced by the Takahashis parallel stories of other Japanese Americans during this period.

In 1965 the Takahashis purchased the subject property, which served as headquarters for the Trading Company. The Trading Company transitioned to importing high-quality products from Japan including porcelain, pottery, furniture, folding screens, and other goods for sale at several retail stores located in San Francisco (on Grant Avenue and Geary Boulevard, in Ghirardelli Square, and on Main Street near Market Street), Sausalito, and New York City. Their goods proved to be popular amongst midcentury US shoppers at a time of growing US fascination with Japan. The subject property also served as a wholesale warehouse selling to retail stores and major museums throughout the country. Of the couple, Tomoye was the fluent Japanese speaker, having studied it for twelve years including majoring in it at UC Berkeley. Due to her language fluency, Tomoye played a critical role in negotiating with manufacturers in Japan, though many distributors at the time had reservations in working with a woman. Through her extensive efforts Tomoye became well known as a subject matter expert on importing high-quality Japanese merchandise, and served as an ad-hoc consultant and liaison. The Trading Company received credit with helping to diminish Japanese-American prejudice through introducing beautifully designed Japanese goods to the American public.

Tomoye's sister, Mrs. Masako Martha Suzuki also played an important role in the Trading Company's efforts, since joining the business in the 1950s. Like her sister, Masako was a San Francisco native, born in 1921. Martha was also forcibly removed from San Francisco, first relocated to the Tanforan detention center and then to the Topaz, Utah concentration camp. She was, however allowed to leave Topaz and complete her degree in Minnesota during the war. She returned to the Bay Area after the war upon accepting a microbiologist position at UC Berkeley. However, she left her position at Cal to assist with the Trading Company. Along with her husband Risaburo Suzuki, they

¹² "Obituary: Masako Martha Suzuki", Nichi Bei, March 1, 2012



⁵ Ibid

⁶ "Announcement of the Recipient of the 2010 Spring Conferment of Decoration" The Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, 2010

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 $^{^{8}}$ "The Gateway to the Pacific, Japanese Americans and the Remaking of San Francisco", Meredith Oda, 2018

⁹ Ibid, page 1

 $^{^{10}}$ Ibid, page 1

^{11 &}quot;Announcement of the Recipient of the 2010 Spring Conferment of Decoration" The Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, 2010

established the Tozai Kogei K.K. in Japan as the Takahashi export arm in purchasing various handcrafted items from rural prefectures throughout the country. Masako was also successful negotiator with Japanese craftsmen. Her efforts led to widespread appreciation in the American market for high-quality Japanese import products. ¹³ These import initiatives played a critical role in supporting the economic and cultural vitality of communities within Japan who were struggling to survive after World War II. Many of the artisans had long family histories as craftsmen, dating back many generations with unique and specialized skills. The opportunities to export goods to the United States thus provided valuable employment during this extremely financially unstable time. Additionally, these opportunities supported cultural preservation, continuing long standing family traditions through the production of handcrafted products. ¹⁴

The Takahashi's success supported their purchase of a spacious Richmond District home, at the time when the neighborhood was primarily a white neighborhood. While faced with racism from some neighbors, Tomoye earned her real estate license and assisted Japanese and Chinese American families with settling in the neighborhood. Their success also let them to establish the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation in 1985. The couple along with Masako began the Foundation with a goal of developing and encouraging an understanding and appreciation of Japanese culture, values, and arts. Having personally experienced the hardships of incarceration during World War II the family felt education of the American public on the Japanese experience was critical to ensure that such tragic events were never repeated. The Foundation was also headquartered at the subject property. The Foundation supported a variety of cultural organizations including the Japanese Wing of the San Francisco Asian Art Museum, Morikami Museum in Florida, Nichi Bei Weekly, documentary films featured on PBS, Cherry Blossom Festival, Stanford University School of Oriental Studies, and the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California. Henri passed away in 2002 at the age of 87.

In 2010 Tomoye and Masako received the Order of the Rising Sun Gold and Silver Rays award from the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco for their contributions to Japanese culture, history, and arts in the United States. At the time of the award the Foundation had distributed over \$3 million in funding towards various cultural organizations throughout California and other places. ¹⁹ Masako died in 2012 at the age of 90^{20} and Tomoye died in 2016 at the age of 100^{21}

The subject property is also significant for its association with the work of famed San Francisco master architect Gustave Albert Lansburgh who designed the original 1912 warehouse. During his career Lansburgh designed more than fifty theater buildings throughout the U.S., in addition to several prominent San Francisco downtown commercial buildings, four of the City's branch library buildings, and advised on acoustics for a few major public venues in California.²² Thus, the 1912 building represents an earlier distinctive project in the career of this master architect as one of his few known warehouses.

²² "Application for Landmark Designation". Architectural Resources Group, July 2021



¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

 $^{^{15}}$ "The Gateway to the Pacific, Japanese Americans and the Remaking of San Francisco", Meredith Oda, 2018 , page 2.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ "Henri Takahashi", San Francisco Chronicle, April 19, 2002

¹⁹ "Announcement of the Recipient of the 2010 Spring Conferment of Decoration" The Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, 2010

²⁰ "Obituary: Masako Martha Suzuki", Nichi Bei, March 1, 2012

²¹ "Philanthropist Tomoye Takahashi Dies at 100", Discover Nikkei, June 16, 2016

The periods of significance for the subject property are 1912 and 1965 - 2019. The 1912 date encompasses the completion of the original heavy timber-frame and brick warehouse and the period from 1965-2019 reflects the Takahashi family's ownership of the property.

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Photos





Above: View from Southeast. Planning Department Staff, August 2021 Below: Southeast façade. Architectural Resources Group, May 2019



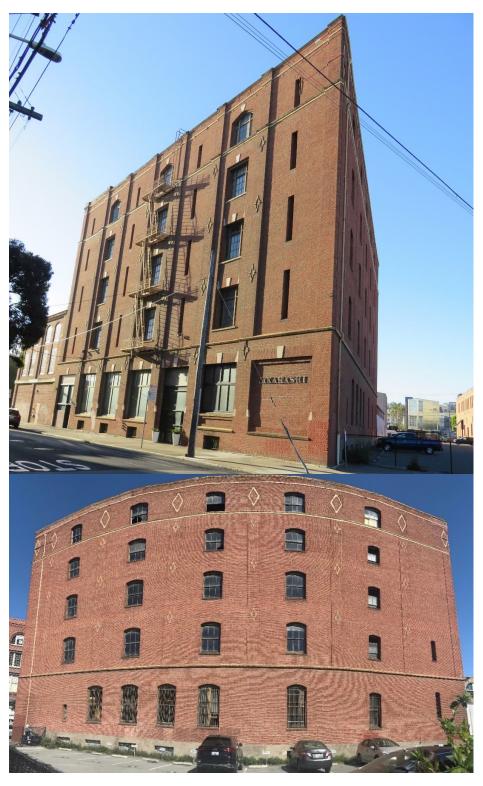






Above Left: Southeast entrance with signage. Architectural Resources Group, July 2019
Above Right: View from northeast along facade. Planning Department Staff, August 2021
Below: Detail of signage at roofline of east façade. Architectural Resources Group, July 2019





Above: North façade. Architectural Resources Group, July 2019 Below: Northwest façade Planning Department Staff, August 2021





South façade of original building. Planning Department Staff, August 2021.









Above: Southeast addition interior, second story. Planning Department Staff, August 2021 Middle: Northeast addition interior, second story. Planning Department Staff, August 2021 Below: Main building interior, second story. Planning Department Staff, August 2021













Left: Tomoye Takahashi (above) and Martha Suzuki (middle) receiving Order of the Rising Sun Gold and Silver Rays award from the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco. Photographer unknown, 2010.

Above Right: Tomoye and Henri Takahashi. University of California, San Francisco Osher Center, date unknown. Bottom: Hand Decorated Takahashi Cloisonne porcelain soap dish and mug, dated 1981 (left), Pair of porcelain Takahashi Kimono mugs with signature stamp (right). Janis McCormick, January 2022.

