| State of California - The Resource DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND F   |  | Primary #<br>HRI #  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| PRIMARY RECORD   |  | Trinomial   | 7   |  |  |
|  | Other Listings   | CHR Status Code:  |   |  |  |
|  | Review Code  | Reviewer  | Date  |  |  |
| Page 1 of 6  | Resource Name or #: (  | Assigned by recorder) 1530 BI   | UCHANAN ST  |  |  |
| P1. Other Identifier: Buchanan/Ja  | apantown YMCA  |   |   |  |  |
| *P2. Location: Not for Publ  *a. County: San Francisco   | ication 🗹 Unrestricte  | d   |   |  |  |
| *b. USGS Quad: San Francisc  | co North, Californi Date   | : 1995  |   |  |  |
| c. Address: 1530 BUCHANAN  | N ST   | City: San Francisco   | <b>ZIP</b> 94115  |  |  |
| d. UTM Zone: Easting   | g: No  | rthing:   |   |  |  |
| e. Other Locational Data: As   |  |   |   |  |  |
| *P3a. Description: (Describe resou   | irce and major elements. Inc   | lude design, materials, condition,  | alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)   |  |  |
| 1530 Buchanan Street is located of O'Farrell streets. Built in 1935, 153 Revival style. The rectangular-plan shingles. The foundation is not visil planters border the front façade an sidewalk. | 0 Buchanan Street is a 2-<br>building, clad in smooth sole. A parking area is loca | story, wood frame, community<br>stucco, is capped by a gable-o<br>ated in between the building ar | v building designed in the Colonial<br>on-hip roof covered in asphalt<br>nd Buchanan Street. Low concrete |  |  |
| The primary façade faces west. The primary façade, and feature fully-gluentil moldings and a blind tympan  | azed, wood doors. The re   | cessed entries have shoulder  |   |  |  |
| *P3b. Resource Attributes: (List a *P4. Resources Present: ✓ Bui   |  | P13. Community Center/Socia<br>ect  |   |  |  |
|  |  |   | *P6. Date Constructed/Age:  ✓ Historic □ Prehistoric □ Both   |  |  |
|  |  |   | 1935 SF Assessor's Office   |  |  |
|  |  |   | *P7. Owner and Address Y M C A OF S F TRS OF THE LE SAM 631 HOWARD ST #500 SAN FRANCISCO CA 94105         |  |  |
|  | Enter  |   | *P8. Recorded By:   |  |  |
|  |  | *   | Page & Turnbull, Inc., MEG<br>724 Pine Street<br>San Francisco, CA 94108                                  |  |  |
|  |  |   | *P9. Date Recorded: 11/14/2007  |  |  |
|  |  |   | *P10. Survey Type:  |  |  |
| *P11. Report Citation: (Cite surve<br>Japantown Better Neighborhood PI   | ey report and other sources,   | or enter "None")  | Reconnaissance - Level 1  |  |  |
| *Attachments: NONE Loca  | tion Map Sketch Map  | ✓ Continuation Sheet ✓ Bu   | illding, Structure, and Object Record   |  |  |
| ☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record   |  |   |   |  |  |
| ☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph   |  | J   |   |  |  |
| DPR 523 A (1/95)   | . ,  |   | *Required Information   |  |  |

| State of California - The Resources Agency |
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Page 2 of 6 Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 1530 BUCHANAN ST

\*P3a: Description (continued):

The primary window type on the first floor is an eight-over-eight, double-hung, aluminum window with molded trim which sits over a wood wall panel and is topped by a four light transom. The second story features six-over-six, double-hung, aluminum windows with molded trim that are typically arranged in pairs and are flanked by pilasters. The building has a molded concrete water-table and the first and second stories are separated by a molded beltcourse. The corners of the primary façade are adorned with quoining. The facade terminates in a roofline with simple, metal fascia. A small blade sign on the primary façade reads: "Buchanan YMCA." Stuccoed chimneys protrude from the north and south ends of the roof.

The north and south facades exhibit the same materials, fenestration patterns, and decorative features as the primary façade. A large gable-roofed addition is located on the east side of the building. It is clad in stucco and has similar fenestration patterns to the original portion of the building.

The building appears to be in good condition.



Detail of an entry on the primary façade. Source: Page and Turnbull

DPR 523 L (1/95) \*Required Information

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| BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD   |   |  |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Page 3 of 6 *Rese  | *NRHP Status Code 3S ource Name or # (assigned by recorder) 1530 Buchanan Street  |  |  |  |  |
| <u> </u>   | MCA / Buchanan YMCA   |  |  |  |  |
| B2. Common name: Buchanan Y  |   |  |  |  |  |
| B3. Original Use: Community  |   |  |  |  |  |
| B4. Present use Community  |   |  |  |  |  |
| *B5. Architectural Style: Col  | onial Revival   |  |  |  |  |
| including railing and stairway; area on first florepairs to building; double doors installed. 1967 renovated. 1987: gymnasium addition construction and addition.  | double-faced panel sign installed. 1966: redwood decking installed over low roof area, or converted to utility, storage and office. 1977: reroofing, exterior plastering and 84: wood floor refinished, gym windows replaced. 1985: restrooms and locker room acted on east side of building, bathrooms altered. 1988: Interior and exterior  Criginal Location:  |  |  |  |  |
| *B8. Related Features: None.  B9a. Architect: Frederick H. Meyer   | b. Builder: Unknown   |  |  |  |  |
| Period of Significance 1935 - 1942   | community development Property Type Civic Applicable Criteria A/1, C/3 ectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity)   |  |  |  |  |
| in the United States. At the time, racial seg-<br>marginalized groups, rather than as a policy<br>YMCAs remained segregated through the 19<br>facilities in various U.S. cities were dedicated<br>Francisco became the first place in the United<br>the prominence of the community in San F | branches of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCAs) were racially segregated gregation was ostensibly regarded as an effective way to focus assistance towards to purposefully exclude minorities from the mainstream organization. However, many 960s, when integration was becoming the norm. Before integration, individual YMCA to serving Native Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans. In 1875, Sand States where YMCAs were established specifically to serve Asian minorities. Due to Francisco, the Chinese became the first Asian group to have its own YMCA. The Dr. Earnest Sturge, who was also instrumental in the founding of Japantown's Christ |  |  |  |  |
| B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List at  | ttributes and codes) HP31. Community Center/Social Hall, HP36. Ethnic minority property (JA, AA)  |  |  |  |  |

\*B12. References:

Exhibit Text at Buchanan YMCA, 2007. The Japanese American Directory, San Francisco: The Japanese American News, Inc., 1941. (continued)

B13. Remarks:

\*B14. Evaluator:

Caitlin Harvey, Page & Turnbull/ Matt Weintraub, SF Planning Department

\*Date of Evaluation: May 2009

(This space reserved for official comments.)



DPR 523B (1/95) \*Required information

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|-------------------------------|---------|------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| *Recorded by: Page & Turnbull | *Date   | May 2009               |                | n 🔲 Update           |

## **B10. Significance (continued)**

The Japanese YMCA was first associated with a facility known as the Haight Youth House, at 121 Haight Street. In 1905, the Japanese Presbyterian Church and Mission was located at the property with Earnest A. Sturge acting as its superintendent. The Japanese YMCA organization was also located at the Haight Street property that year. The Youth House was closed in 1916, due to waning religious enthusiasm during World War I. The Japanese YMCA operated out of several locations between 1918 and 1926 (including the Sutter Street YMCA that opened in 1918 at 1908 Sutter Street), before it moved into a large 19<sup>th</sup> century house at 1409 Sutter Street. However, the organization quickly outgrew even this facility and was in need of space to accommodate recreational and social activities for its rapidly growing *Nisei* (second generation Japanese) membership. Additionally, because many Japanese families began to have children in the 1920s, recreational facilities and child care were primary concerns of the Japanese American community in San Francisco. As a result, a fund-raising campaign began in the late 1920s for the construction of a permanent building to house the YMCA. The project was financed by the San Francisco Japantown community, which raised \$25,000 that was then matched by approximately \$15,000 donated by supporters in Japan. It was one of four community facilities in Japantown (along with the Japanese Salvation Army, the Japanese YWCA, and Kinmon Gakuen) to be community-funded in this way.

The site on which the Japanese YMCA was constructed had previously been occupied by a series of one-story, single-family dwellings, a printing shop, an auto storage building, and a boarding house. The property had previously been owned by Mrs. Hulda M. Popper, a playground director. It was transferred to the Title Insurance and Guarantee Co. in 1929 and then to the Trustees of the San Francisco YMCA in 1935. The earlier buildings were apparently razed during the transitional period and the YMCA building was constructed in 1935-1936 and dedicated in 1936. Dignitaries and civic leaders such as Japanese Ambassador Katsuji Debuchi, who had helped raise funds for the building in Japan, San Francisco Mayor Rolph, and Captain Robert Dollar, a strong supporter of the YMCA organization, participated in the groundbreaking. The facility was touted as the only one of its kind outside of Japan. The building originally contained a lobby, social room, office, gymnasium, shower and locker rooms on the first floor and a neighborhood room for social events and a club room for boys on the second floor. In addition, a radio room, library, kitchen, dining room, and small chapel were part of the facility. A second unit with a dormitory and pool were slated to be constructed at a later date. The YMCA offered English classes, sponsored Japanese youth clubs, football, baseball and basketball teams, offered a place to play pool, and hosted a summer camp program for Japanese American children.

In 1941, just before World War II, various clubs were located at the YMCA, including the YMCA Camera Club, the Mother's Club, the YMCA Language School, and the Hakubai Kai. At the outset of World War II, the YMCA served as a registration location for Japanese Americans being sent to the internment camps. Then, for the duration of the war, the building was rented to the USO. The Japanese American community returned from Japantown after the war and the building's use as a YMCA was renewed; however, it had a more diverse ethnic membership after that time. A similar happenstance occurred with the Japanese YWCA and, catalyzed by that organization's new policies which disallowed the reforming of segregated chapters, a core group of women from the Japanese YWCA partnered with the Japanese YMCA to form the first joint YMCA/YWCA in the United States. Their activities included an interracial youth program to serve Japanese American and African American children and teens.

In the 1970s, Yori Wada, director of the Japanese YMCA at the time, estimated that the facility was used primarily by African Americans living in the Western Addition and that only about 20 percent of the YMCA's members were Japanese American. As an integrated facility it came to be known as the Buchanan YMCA. It hosted a drug treatment program, tutorial classes, a youth employment program and recreational activities such as basketball and pool. Japanese Americans continued to utilize the YMCA as a site for Explorer Scout activities, taiko practices, karate classes, Asian American Dance Collective classes, and as the home for a volleyball team, the Shigin Kai (singing club), and the Nihonmachi Sansei basketball team.

The architect of the Japanese YMCA was Frederick Herman Meyer (1876-1961), who was one of the most prolific and versatile architects in San Francisco at the turn of the 20th century and designed in a wide variety of styles and building types. Frederick Meyer was born in San Francisco and had no formal architectural training, but began his career as a draftsman in a planing mill in the early 1890s. He was active in the rebuilding of San Francisco after the 1906 Earthquake and Fires. He later expanded his design practice to other parts of California. In 1934, he was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). He is best known for designing the Humboldt Bank and Monadnock buildings in San Francisco, as well as various projects for the San Francisco General Hospital and Pacific Gas & Electric Company. The former two designs were lauded for their extensive use of glazing and incorporation of fire-safety systems. In addition to the Japanese YMCA, Meyer is known to have also designed the Chinatown YMCA (1925) and nearby Raphael Weill School at 1501 O'Farrell Street (1927). In all, he designed more than 15 large office and commercial buildings, ten industrial plants (including three breweries), eight hospitals, three schools, eight City of San Francisco projects (including fire houses and branch libraries), and five major club and association buildings. He was also on the San Francisco Board of Consulting Architects in 1912, a force behind the creation of the Civic Center.

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| *Record | ed b | y: | Page & Turnbull | *Date   | May 2009               | □ Continuation | n 🗌 Update           |

The Japanese YMCA at 1530 Buchanan Street retains integrity of association, as it continues to be used as a YMCA, specifically one associated with Japantown. The building retains integrity of location, having never been moved from its original site. Its integrity of setting is somewhat diminished as the neighborhood where it is located was drastically reshaped by federally funded urban redevelopment projects in the 1960s and 1970s. Though the area remains generally residential, the street grid around the YMCA building has been reconfigured (the building now faces a parking lot, as Buchanan Street has been closed immediately south of the Geary Expressway) and it is now surrounded by a large apartment complex rather than by small-scale housing and commerce. The building possesses integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling, however. Few major alterations appear to have been made to the original building. A large gymnasium addition was constructed to the rear of the building, but is differentiated in design and massing, and the form and materials of the original 1936 structure remain intact.

The Japanese YMCA at 1530 Buchanan Street appears to be eligible for listing in the National and California registers and for local listing. The building's associations with the Japanese American community, which began with its construction in 1935-36, were strongest during the pre-war period, although some association with the Japanese American community has persisted to the present day. The Japanese YMCA represents the community-building efforts of Japanese and Japanese Americans in San Francisco, the importance of religion, community values, civic service, and personal betterment in Japanese American society, and the struggles for civil rights and community recognition that the Japanese Americans encountered. Though the Buchanan YMCA is currently a fully integrated organization, the Japanese American community still recognizes this facility as a part of its cultural history and present-day community. It is still used by the Japanese American population that resides in Japantown. Along with other significant and active properties like the Japanese YWCA and Japanese Salvation Army, the building fits into the context of community organizations in Japantown, particularly that of religiously affiliated Japanese missions. In addition to its cultural importance, the YMCA building was designed by Frederick Meyer, who can be considered a master architect. The YMCA building fits into the context of to Meyer's diverse portfolio; it is one of two ethnically-oriented YMCA facilities that he designed in the city, and one of two buildings he designed in the Japantown neighborhood.

The status code of 3S assigned to this property means that it has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an individual property through survey evaluation. It is therefore also eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources and for local listing. This property was not assessed for its potential to yield information important in prehistory or history, per National Register Criterion D.



Buchanan YMCA, 1964. (Courtesy of San Francisco Public Library)

State of California — The Resources Agency Primary # **DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION** HRI# CONTINUATION SHEET Trinomial Page 6 of 6 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 1530 Buchanan Street \*Recorded by: Page & Turnbull \*Date May 2009 Update **B12. References (continued)** Japantown Task Force. Images of America: San Francisco's Japantown, San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005. Koga, Sumio. "A Centennial Legacy: History of the Japanese Christian Missions in North America, 1877-1977." Chicago: Nobart, Inc., 1977. Pease, Ben. San Francisco's Japantown and Western Addition maps; 1910, 1920s, 1940, 1948-49, 1956-59, 1972, 2004. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: 1893, 1899, 1913, 1950. San Francisco Assessor's Office, sales ledgers. San Francisco Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan Historic Context Statement, 2009. San Francisco Block Books: 1894, 1901, 1906, 1909. San Francisco Chronicle, "Japan YMCA Plan International Night," 10/4/1929, p.7.
San Francisco Chronicle, "Nippon Ambassador Turns First Shovelful of Earth for New SF Japanese YMCA," 5/13/1930, p.12.
San Francisco Chronicle, "Japanese to get YMCA here," 6/21/1935, p.6.
San Francisco Chronicle, "New \$80,000 YMCA Building Dedicated by Civic Leaders," 1/13/1936, p. 5. San Francisco City Directories.

San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, permit records and plans.

United States Federal Census records.

Yamato, Alex. California Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory forms: Buchanan YMCA, 11/30/1979.