State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Other Listings
Review Code
Reviewer Date

P1. Other Identifier: Kabuki Sundance Theater

*P2. Location:   ☑ Not for Publication ☑ Unrestricted
*a. County: San Francisco
*b. USGS Quad: San Francisco North, Calif. Date: 1995
c. Address: 1881 POST STREET
City: San Francisco
ZIP 94115
d. UTM Zone: 
Easting: 
Northing:
e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number 0701 001

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)
1881 Post Street is located on a 154’ x 176’ lot occupying the entire east blockface of Fillmore Street, between Post Street and Geary Boulevard. The primary façade faces north toward Post Street, and secondary facades face west onto Fillmore Street and south onto Geary Boulevard. Built in 1967, 1881 Post Street is a multiple-story, reinforced concrete theater designed in a Japanese-inspired modern style. The rectangular-plan building, clad in smooth concrete, is capped by a flat roof. The foundation is not visible. The building includes an integral parking garage at basement level, which has an entrance at the center of the west façade. Concrete steps with metal railings lead to the main entry from the sidewalk, and concrete planters border the front façade.

The building includes 1 commercial unit with 1 entrance at the street level. The main entry is located at the east side of the primary façade, and features multiple fully-glazed, metal double doors. The entry is located within a fully-glazed, plate glass aluminum frame entry assembly. The entry is overhung by a glass and steel shed roof structure that contains a mezzanine.

(continued)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP10. Theater

*P4. Resources Present: ☑ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other

*P5a. Photo

*P5b. Description of Photo: View of primary and west facades, looking southeast. 11/13/2007

*P6. Date Constructed/Age:
☑ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1967 SF Assessor's Office

*P7. Owner and Address
JAPAN CENTER KABUKI I LLC
C/O 3D INVESTMENTS LLC
433 N CAMDEN DR STE 900
BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210

*P8. Recorded By:
Page & Turnbull, Inc., DL
724 Pine Street
San Francisco, CA 94108


*P10. Survey Type:
Reconnaissance - Level 1

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "None")
Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan

*Required Information
Except for the glazed entry and mezzanine structure, the facades are blank and divided into panels by plain vertical trim resembling half timbering. Signs near the entrance and the upper wall on the south sides of the east and west facades read “Kabuki 8 Theatres.” The façades terminate in a plain wood fascia board that matches the vertical trim.

The building appears to be in good condition.
State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

PRIMARY RECORD

P1. Other Identifier: Kinokuniya Building

P2. Location:  ☑ Unrestricted
   *a. County: San Francisco
   *b. USGS Quad: San Francisco North, California  Date: 1995
   c. Address: 1825 POST STREET City: San Francisco
   d. UTM Zone: Easting: Northing:
   e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number 0701 007

P3a. Description: (Describe resource and major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

1825 Post Street is located on a roughly 176' x 220.5' lot occupying the entire eastern blockface of Webster Street, between Post Street and Geary Boulevard. The primary façade faces north onto Post Street, and secondary facades face south onto Geary Boulevard and east onto Webster Street. Built in 1967, 1825 Post Street is a 2-story, reinforced concrete, commercial building designed in a Japanese-inspired modern style. The rectangular-plan building, clad in molded concrete, is capped by a flat roof. Concrete planters are located around the building and concrete stairs and ramps with metal railings lead up to the entrances from the sidewalk.

The primary façade faces north and has three entrances on the first story. The main entry is located at the center of the primary façade, and features four fully glazed, metal double doors within a glazed aluminum storefront assembly. The entrances are located within a two-story high recessed bay that is covered by a concrete canopy supported by square posts. (continued)

P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP6. 1-3 Story Commercial Building

P4. Resources Present: ☑ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other

P5a. Photo

P5b. Description of Photo:
   View of primary façade, looking southeast. 11/13/2007

P6. Date Constructed/Age:
   ☑ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
   1967 SF Assessor's Office

P7. Owner and Address
   KINOKUNIYA BOOK STORES OF A
   1581 WEBSTER ST
   SAN FRANCISCO CA 94115

P8. Recorded By:
   Page & Turnbull, Inc., DL
   724 Pine Street
   San Francisco, CA 94108


P10. Survey Type:
   Reconnaissance - Level 1

P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "None")
   Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan

*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location Map ☐ Sketch Map ☑ Continuation Sheet ☑ Building, Structure, and Object Record
   ☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record
   ☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (list):

DPR 523 A (1/95)

*Required Information
Other entries on the façade also consist of glazed aluminum doors, most of which are found in multiples, and are part of glazed aluminum storefront assemblies. Fenestration consists of fixed plate glass, aluminum sash windows. The façade is divided into panels by vertical and horizontal trim, resembling half-timbering. Each panel is articulated by grids molded into the stucco. The façade terminates in flat overhanging eaves supported by projecting beams.

The east façade, which fronts on Webster Street, exhibits the same materials, fenestration, and decorative elements as the primary façade. It has two entrances at the center and south sides of the façade at the first floor level. Both consist of fully-glazed aluminum doors in glazed, aluminum storefront assemblies. The bridge mentioned earlier projects from the center of the façade at the second story level.

The south façade, which fronts on Geary Boulevard, exhibits the same materials, fenestration, and decorative elements as the primary façade. It has no entrances, but a two-story recessed section, similar to the primary entry porch, is located at the center of the façade and features large plate glass aluminum sash window assemblies.

The building appears to be in good condition.
View of south (Geary Street) façade and east (Webster Street) façade.
Source: Page and Turnbull
P1. Other Identifier: Kintetsu Mall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Listings</th>
<th>Review Code</th>
<th>Reviewer</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**P2. Location:**
- Not for Publication
- Unrestricted

**a. County:** San Francisco

**b. USGS Quad:** San Francisco North, California

**c. Address:** 11 PEACE PLAZA
**City:** San Francisco
**ZIP:** 94115

**d. UTM Zone:** Northing:

**e. Other Locational Data:** Assessor's Parcel Number 0700 009

**P3a. Description:**
11 Peace Plaza is located on an approximately 197’ x 375’ rectangular grouping of parcels on the south side of Post Street, between the Peace Plaza and Webster Street. Built in 1968, 11 Peace Plaza is a 2-story reinforced concrete commercial building that is part of the Japan Center mall complex. It is designed in a Japanese-inspired modern style. The rectangular-plan building, clad in molded concrete panels, is capped by a flat roof with a monitor at the center. The foundation is not visible.

The primary façade faces east onto Peace Plaza and includes 1 entrance at the second story level (which is ground level on this side of the building). The entry is located near the center of the primary façade and features fully-glazed metal automatic sliding doors in a glazed aluminum door assembly. The façade is adorned with wood trim that resembles half-timbering and terminates in a flat roofline.

The north façade, which fronts on Post Street, features three storefronts with entrances. (continued)

**P3b. Resource Attributes:**
- HP6. 1-3 Story Commercial Building

**P4. Resources Present:**
- Building
- Structure
- Object
- Site
- District
- Element of District
- Other

**P5a. Photo**
- View of primary façade, looking southwest. 11/13/2007

**P5b. Description of Photo:**

**P6. Date Constructed/Age:**
- Historic
- Prehistoric
- Both

1968 SF Assessor's Office

**P7. Owner and Address**
KINTETSU ENTERPRISES CO AME
1790 POST ST
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94115

**P8. Recorded By:**
Page & Turnbull, Inc., DL
724 Pine Street
San Francisco, CA 94108

**P9. Date Recorded:** 11/13/2007

**P10. Survey Type:**
Reconnaissance - Level 1

**P11. Report Citation:**
Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan

**Attachments:**
- NONE
- Location Map
- Sketch Map
- Continuation Sheet
- Building, Structure, and Object Record
- Archaeological Record
- District Record
- Linear Feature Record
- Milling Station Record
- Rock Art Record
- Artifact Record
- Photograph Record
- Other (list):

DPR 523 A (1/95)

*Required Information*
The westernmost storefront, located at the first story level, features a fully-glazed, aluminum entry assembly with automatic sliding glass doors. The two storefronts to the east also feature aluminum window and door assemblies, but are located at the second story level. Both are accessed through gateways from the sidewalk. These gateways are covered by gable roofs and supported by wood posts with Japanese-influenced details. The gateways provide access to stairs surrounded by stuccoed half walls that lead to the entries. The eastern entry is surmounted by gabled portico, clad in wood shingles and featuring flared eaves and decorative beams. The middle entry is covered by a clay tile-clad shed roof. A parking garage entrance is located between the westernmost and middle storefronts. Materials, fenestration, and decorative elements on the rest of the north facade are all identical to those of the primary facade.

An enclosed pedestrian bridge with a gently arched form connects the second story of the west façade to the Kinokuniya Building across Webster Street. The bridge is clad in molded concrete panels and also features wood trim that resembles half-timbering. It is fenestrated with fixed, aluminum sash windows. The roof of the bridge is flat and has overhanging eaves that are supported by projecting beams. The west façade of 11 Peace Plaza is otherwise unfenestrated and unadorned, with the exception of a loading dock at the center of the first story level, directly below the pedestrian bridge.

The south façade, which fronts on Geary Boulevard, features four storefronts at the first story level. All feature fixed, aluminum sash windows and fully glazed aluminum doors. The doors are all recessed and accessed by concrete steps from the sidewalk. To the east of the storefronts is a parking garage entrance. The second story of the south façade is unfenestrated and consists of the same molded concrete panels and wood half-timbering that is found on the other facades. The south facade terminates in a flat roofline with overhanging eaves supported by projecting beams.

The building appears to be in good condition.
View of west façade and pedestrian bridge, looking southeast.
Source: Page and Turnbull

View of south façade, looking northwest.
Source: Page and Turnbull
P1. Other Identifier: Peace Plaza

**P2. Location:**
- Not for Publication
- Unrestricted
- **a. County:** San Francisco
- **b. USGS Quad:** San Francisco North, California
- **c. Address:** PEACE PLAZA
- **City:** San Francisco
- **ZIP:** 94115
- **d. UTM Zone:**
- **Easting:**
- **Northing:**
- **e. Other Locational Data:** Assessor's Parcel Number 0700 023 (and 0700 022)

**P3a. Description:**
The Peace Plaza is a 160' x 197' public park at the center of the block bounded by Laguna, Webster, and Post streets, and Geary Boulevard. Built in 1968 and renovated in 2000, the Peace Plaza is an open space associated with the Japan Center mall complex. The Kintetsu and Miyako Malls are located to the east and west of the Plaza. The north side of the Plaza fronts on Post Street, but corresponds to the axis of the Buchanan Mall open space, which runs north-south on the other side of Post Street.

The Plaza is paved with slate. Two sections of wall enclose the south side of the plaza, separating it from Geary Boulevard. The western portion of wall is made of textured concrete and is curved slightly at one end, echoing the contours of the round pagoda structure nearby. The east portion of wall is taller, clad with slate tiles and has a gateway at its west end, which provides access to concrete stairs that lead down to Geary Boulevard. A grade change defined by stone steps runs east to west, dividing the plaza into two uneven sections. The northern portion of the plaza is smaller and features a cluster of sculptural seating elements and planters on the east and west sides. (continued)

**P3b. Resource Attributes:**
- HP31. Urban Open Space

**P4. Resources Present:**
- Building
- Structure
- Object
- Site
- District
- Element of District
- Other

**P5a. Photo:**
View of plaza, looking south. 11/13/2007

**P6. Date Constructed/Age:**
- Historic
- Prehistoric
- Both
- 1968/2000 Japantown Task Force dat

**P7. Owner and Address:**
RECREATION AND PARK DEPARTM
MCLAREN LODGE
501 STANYAN ST
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94117

**P8. Recorded By:**
Page & Turnbull, Inc., DL
724 Pine Street
San Francisco, CA 94108

**P9. Date Recorded:** 11/13/2007

**P10. Survey Type:** Reconnaissance - Level 1

**P11. Report Citation:**
Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan

**Attachments:**
- NONE
- Location Map
- Sketch Map
- Continuation Sheet
- Building, Structure, and Object Record
- Archaeological Record
- District Record
- Linear Feature Record
- Milling Station Record
- Rock Art Record
- Artifact Record
- Photograph Record
- Other (list):

DPR 523 A (1/95)
The central portion of the plaza is flanked by two rows of square lantern-like lightposts and square concrete planters containing trees. A bronze monument is located near the center of the Sutter streetfront of the plaza and bears scenes of Japanese-American history in sculpted relief. The southern and larger portion of the plaza features round concrete seating/planter elements and longer serpentine planters on the east side. The Peace Pagoda and a fountain are located on the west side. The fountain is a terraced structure clad in stone adorned with rocks, raised metal lettering reading "Japantown Peace Plaza", and a small window in the wall of the structure revealing an "eternal flame". A row of cherry trees is planted behind the fountain.

The Peace Pagoda is a reinforced concrete structure, approximately four stories in height, designed in a Japanese-inspired style and located in the southwest quadrant of Peace Plaza. The circular-plan structure consists of a core of multiple, vertical concrete posts supporting a series of five broad, circular, conical roofs clad in copper. Exposed concrete beams, resembling rafters, radiate from the central core of the structure to support the conical roofs. The structure sits on a stepped concrete base. A tall sculpted metal finial made up of stacked, bell-shaped elements and a four-finned, pierced ornament, crowns the structure.

The plaza and pagoda appear to be in good condition.
Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda, looking northwest.
Source: Page and Turnbull
P1. Other Identifier: Miyako Mall

P2. Location: ☑ Unrestricted
   *a. County: San Francisco
   *b. USGS Quad: San Francisco North, California
   Date: 1995
   c. Address: 22 PEACE PLZ
   City: San Francisco
   ZIP: 94115
   d. UTM Zone: Northing:
   Easting:
   e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number 0700 029

P3a. Description: 22 Peace Plaza is located on an approximately 196’ x 318’ L-shaped grouping of parcels on the south side of Post Street, between the Peace Plaza and Laguna Street. Built in 1968, 22 Peace Plaza is a 2-story reinforced concrete commercial building designed in a Japanese-inspired modern style. The L-plan building, clad in smooth concrete, is capped by a flat roof with a monitor at the center. The foundation is not visible.

The primary façade faces west onto Peace Plaza. The primary facade includes 2 entrances on the first story. The 2 entries are located near the center of the primary façade and feature fully-glazed metal doors. The northern entry provides access to the interior of the mall and features an automatic sliding door, while the southern door accesses an individual commercial space and features a set of double doors in a glazed entry assembly. (continued)

P3b. Resource Attributes: HP6. 1-3 Story Commercial Building

P4. Resources Present: ☑ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other

P5a. Photo

P5b. Description of Photo: View of primary façade, looking southeast. 11/13/2007

P6. Date Constructed/Age:
☑ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both

P7. Owner and Address
UNION BANK OF CALIFORNIA NA
P.O. BOX 7788
NEWPORT BEACH CA 92658

P8. Recorded By:
Page & Turnbull, Inc. AH
724 Pine Street
San Francisco, CA 94108


P10. Survey Type: Reconnaissance - Level 1

P11. Report Citation: Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan

Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location Map ☐ Sketch Map ☑ Continuation Sheet ☑ Building, Structure, and Object Record ☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record ☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (list):

DPR 523 A (1/95) *Required Information
The second story of the primary façade features fixed, plate-glass, aluminum sash windows. The façade is adorned with wood trim that resembles half-timbering and molded concrete panels. The facade terminates in a flat overhanging eave. Additional features on the upper story of the primary façade include a sign that reads “Union Bank of California” in the north bay.

The north facade features two entrances, both featuring fully-glazed, metal double doors. One entrance is located at the first story level within a two-story recessed vestibule at the west side of the façade. The other entrance is located within a recessed vestibule at the second story level on the east side of the façade. Due to the slope of the lot, the north elevation is split-level. Materials, fenestration, and decorative elements are all identical to those of the primary façade, with the addition of projecting beams below the overhanging eave.

The east façade of the building and the north side of the eastern ell, border the driveway and parking area of the neighboring Hotel Kabuki. These ell facades are adorned with vertical wood beams that create a screen in front of the concrete clad walls, which are unfenestrated.

One entrance is located on the south façade and consists of a fully-glazed, aluminum door within a glazed, aluminum frame entry assembly. This and other multi-light aluminum sash windows are located within a 2-story recessed porch that is overhung by the flat eaves of the roof, supported by square wood posts. Materials, fenestration, and decorative elements are similar to those on the primary façade.

The building appears to be in good condition.
P1. Other Identifier: Hotel Kabuki

P2. Location:
- Not for Publication
- Unrestricted
  *a. County: San Francisco
  *b. USGS Quad: San Francisco North, California  Date: 1995
  c. Address: 1625 POST STREET  City: San Francisco  ZIP 94115
  d. UTM Zone:  Northing:
  e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number 0700 018

P3a. Description:
1625 Post Street is located on a roughly 219.5' x 197' through lot occupying the entire west blockface of Laguna Street between Post Street and Geary Boulevard. Built in 1968, 1625 Post Street is a 15-story, reinforced concrete, hotel building designed in a Japanese-inspired modern style. The L-plan building, clad in smooth concrete, is capped by a flat roof. The foundation is not visible. The building is made up of a 15-story tower and a 4-story block to the east. The site includes a landscaped, paved motorcourt to the west of the primary façade. A free-standing sign in the motorcourt reads "Hotel Kabuki."

The primary façade faces west onto the driveway. The building includes 172 units with three entrances on the first story. The main entry is located at the center of the primary façade, and features a fully-glazed, aluminum revolving door flanked by fully-glazed, multi-light aluminum doors all contained within a multi-light, aluminum window assembly that dominates the first story of the primary facade. The primary window type on the upper stories is a sliding, aluminum sash. (continued)

P3b. Resource Attributes:  HP5. Hotel/Motel

P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other

P5a. Photo

P5b. Description of Photo:
View of primary and west facades, looking southeast. 11/13/2007

P6. Date Constructed/Age:
- Historic
- Prehistoric
- Both
1968 SF Assessor's Office

P7. Owner and Address:
JAPAN CENTER HOTEL ASSOC'S L C/O 3RD INVESTMENTS
433 N.CAMDEN DR# 900
BEVERLY HILLS  CA  90210

P8. Recorded By:
Page & Turnbull, Inc., DL
724 Pine Street
San Francisco, CA 94108


P10. Survey Type:
Reconnaissance - Level 1

P11. Report Citation:
Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan

*Attachments:  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record
Archeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record
Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (list):

DPR 523 A (1/95)
The upper stories of the main tower feature aluminum sliding glass doors and cantilevered balconies that encircle each story. The primary façade terminates in a simple projecting cornice supported by brackets.

A two-story metal and glass addition projects from the north façade and contains a commercial unit. It has two recessed entrances on its north façade, both of which feature fully-glazed, multi-light, aluminum double doors. The flat roof is broken into sections and is stepped. The addition connects the main tower with the four-story block to the east.

The four-story block is clad in smooth stucco and adorned with half-timbering. It also features sliding, aluminum sash windows and a balcony spans the east façade at the third story level. The facades of the four-story block terminates in a paneled box cornice supported by projecting beams.

The building appears to be in good condition.
**NRHP Status Code**: 7N1

**Resource Name or #** (assigned by recorder): Japanese Cultural and Trade Center

<table>
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<th>Historic name:</th>
<th>Japanese Cultural and Trade Center</th>
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<td>B2.</td>
<td>Common name:</td>
<td>Japan Center</td>
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<td>B3.</td>
<td>Original Use:</td>
<td>Commercial shopping mall</td>
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<td>B4.</td>
<td>Present use</td>
<td>Commercial shopping mall</td>
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**Architectural Style**: Japanese American modern


**Moved?**: ☑ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown

**Related Features**: None.

**Architect**: Minoru Yamasaki

**Builder**: Unknown

**Theme**: Cultural community development

**Area**: Japantown, San Francisco, California

**Period of Significance**: 1965 - present

**Property Type**: Commercial / open space

**Applicable Criteria**: A/1, C/3

**Development History**

As early as 1953, the planning committee of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California recommended the study of a possible tourist shopping center, specializing in the sale of Japanese goods, to be located on the block bounded by Post, Buchanan, Geary, and Webster streets in the Japantown neighborhood of San Francisco. The project was proposed as a joint venture between the community and the city as part of the federally funded redevelopment program that was also proposed at that time. A 1953 article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* stated that “if preliminary plans are not made, the situation will arise where the Japanese community has missed the boat.” More than a decade later, the Japanese Cultural and Trade center (later called Japan Center) was constructed on a newly created super-block bounded by Post, Laguna, Geary, and Fillmore Streets as part of the Western Addition A1 phase of redevelopment that was undertaken by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA). The Western Addition A1 was one of the first urban renewal projects in the nation; it was approved by the Board of Supervisors as early as 1956.¹ Along with the Golden Gateway project near the Embarcadero, it was one of the earliest undertakings by the SFRA to eliminate perceived blight in the city. (continued)

**Additional Resource Attributes**: HP6. 1-3 story commercial bldg., HP31. Urban open space, HP36. Ethnic minority property (JA)

**References**:


(continued)

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

**Date of Evaluation**: May 2009

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B10. Significance (continued)

Though Japan Center was not completed until 1968, well after the A1 phase had been initiated, it was a centerpiece of the A1 phase. The Western Addition A1 phase of redevelopment has since become associated with an intrusive and unnecessarily drastic approach to urban renewal that did not adequately take community interests into account. As part of the A1 urban renewal program, which attempted to alleviate perceived problems of blight in the Western Addition, 27 blocks of older commercial and housing stock were cleared. Major projects, including the Japan Center, were undertaken to redevelop the area with new housing, community, and commercial facilities. The A1 phase resulted in widespread community objections and the creation of organizations to protest unmitigated demolitions and displacement, which eventually resulted in greater community input, investment in rehabilitation of existing structures, and neighborhood-scaled redevelopment in the later Western Addition A2 phase.

The infusion of ethnic character into the design and planning of a federally funded urban redevelopment project, as occurred with the Japan Center, was innovative. In 1966, SFRA Director Justin Hermann reported to the New York Times: “We set out four or five years ago to try and crystallize and preserve the special cultural and social values of San Francisco, which in time tend to be lost and dissipated.” In addition to Japantown, other SFRA neighborhood cultural centers were planned for Chinatown, North Beach (Italian), Washington Square (Greek), and Fillmore (African American). However, of the six neighborhood cultural centers that were initially proposed for San Francisco by the SFRA, only those in Japantown (the first) and Chinatown (the second) were ever realized, and no other similar projects are known to have been constructed anywhere else in the nation during the period of federal urban renewal. Plans for the Japan Center development were first presented in 1960 by developer Mr. Tokioka. Negotiations and bureaucratic issues delayed the project, but ground was finally broken in 1965 and the project was completed in 1968. Its opening coincided with that year’s Cherry Blossom Festival celebrations and the mall was dedicated by Mayor Joseph Alioto.

Originally known as the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center, the mall encompasses three standard city blocks and is flanked on the south side by the Geary Expressway, which was also constructed as part of the A1 phase of redevelopment. The Japan Center project displaced approximately 50 businesses and 1,500 residents that had occupied the buildings previously located on the site. Most of these were Japanese American owned and occupied, including some of Japantown’s oldest established businesses like the Benkyo-do Co., Nichi Bei Bussan, and the Aki Hotel. Intended to instill a modern commercial presence in the neighborhood, new Japanese Cultural and Trade Center was designed with an international corporate approach that initially attracted a variety of business interests from Japan. However, as time progressed most of these large corporate tenants were replaced by more domestically and locally oriented businesses, typically Japanese American. Though not comparable to the intimate neighborhood enclave of Japanese American shops, businesses, and homes that had existed on the site before redevelopment, Japan Center has come to serve as a commercial center with a mostly local focus. It has become an important neighborhood venue for Japanese American businesses, activities, events, and organizations. The Center is a destination for the local and regional Japanese American community, as well as for Japanese nationals and for visitors of all backgrounds.

Japan Center consists of three mall buildings – the Kinokuniya Building, the Kintetsu Mall, and the Miyako Mall – as well as the Miyako Hotel and Kabuki Theater, which anchor the east and west ends of the complex, respectively. The Kinokuniya Building (located between Fillmore and Webster Streets) is connected to the Kintetsu Mall (located between Webster and Buchanan Streets) by an arched, enclosed pedestrian bridge that spans Webster Street, while the open space of Peace Plaza unites the Kintetsu Building and the Miyako Mall (located between Buchanan and Laguna Streets) across the former Buchanan Street right-of-way. William Ku of the architecture firm Yamasaki & Associates was quoted in a 1962 San Francisco Chronicle article as saying that the Center provided a noteworthy opportunity to organize a three-block complex as a whole, which was rare in a city the size of San Francisco. The intended approach was “to produce a Japanese feeling with the most modern building technology,” resulting in the strict proportions, rhythmic repetition of forms, and exposed structural members of traditional Japanese architecture reproduced in reinforced concrete, rather than wood. Yamasaki & Associates also addressed the project as a creative treatment of the common problems found in American shopping malls, specifically citing the parking garage under the mall as a solution for concealing cars from view and thus maintaining the human scale of the Center. In implementing this and other conventions, the design referenced nation-wide trends in large-scale architecture of the period. Such trends included expansive pedestrian plazas, the minimizing of automobile presence through conventions like organization of super-blocks to break the street grid and construction of underground parking garages, inward-focused spatial organization of buildings, and a clear distinction in design and scale from surrounding urban fabric, all of which are characteristics found in Japan Center. While Japan Center is a typical example of period design and planning, it is also notable that, as an early redevelopment project, “it escaped the rigid orthodoxy that was responsible for the most pathological projects undertaken elsewhere.”

This includes its innovative integration of Japanese-influenced design elements, the likes of which were not witnessed in other redevelopment projects of the period.

B10. Significance (continued)
The interior of the mall buildings were designed by Takenaka & Associates of Osaka, Japan, a firm considered to be experts in
traditional Japanese design. The building interiors are meant to resemble narrow Japanese streets with traditional open-front shops
and are characterized by spacious public areas with natural lighting provided by clerestories and skylights. The Japanese stylistic
aesthetic as well as the "outdoor" effect is embodied in wood screens, panels, faux half-timbering and glazed tile roofs that define
storefronts, and elements like fountains, planters, and a stairway reminiscent of an arched bridge. Within the Kintetsu Building’s
food mall, many restaurants display representations of their menu offerings in glass cases at the front of the restaurant, as is
common throughout Japan and at Japanese restaurants in the United States. Also following Japanese design trends of interactive
space, the Peace Plaza contributes a true open space setting to the flow of the interior mall spaces where additional public
gatherings and functions take place.

Architect Minoru Yamasaki
Japan Center was designed by architect Minoru Yamasaki (1912-1986), a second generation Japanese American who attended
architecture school at the University of Washington and New York University. After working for two prominent New York
architecture firms, he established his own practice, Yamasaki & Associates, in Troy, Michigan in 1949. Yamasaki’s work was
primarily focused on designs for public buildings, which gained him a national reputation that led to the contract to design the U.S.
Consulate in Kobe, Japan (1954). He gained further renown in the 1950s and was known as a practitioner of "romanticized
modernism," though he is known to have held a strong appreciation for traditional Japanese design. Yamasaki received the AIA’s
First Honor Award three times and was made a Fellow in the AIA in 1960.

Yamasaki’s designs for campus buildings and plazas at Wayne State University in Detroit in the mid-1950s first expressed his
aesthetic preferences for a fusion of simplified Asian and European forms, such as reflecting pools and arches. These elements
would continue in many of Yamasaki’s works, including the United States Science Pavilion, constructed in Seattle in 1962 for the
“Century 21 Exposition” world’s fair. Evidence of this Asian-European fusion style can be seen in Japan Center, where it might be
more appropriately described as Japanese American fusion, in which the intent was to reference a Japanese aesthetic with
modern construction and stylistic overtones. Of the various culturally referential building designs that are found in the core of San
Francisco’s Japantown, Japan Center was the first to exhibit such a blend of Japanese and Modernist styles, which has continued
in the designs of later commercial buildings, churches, libraries, community centers, and organizational headquarters (both
redevelopment-related and not), such as those located along and adjacent to Buchanan Mall, on the north side of Post Street, and
along Sutter and Laguna streets.

Yamasaki is probably best known for his design of the World Trade Center (1976) in New York City in collaboration with Leslie E.
Robertson and Emery Roth. He was selected over renowned architects like I.M. Pei, Philip Johnson, and Walter Gropius for the
project. At the time, the World Trade Center towers were the tallest buildings in the world, with a design that referenced classical
and gothic styles, but also stressed technology and modernism. Of the World Trade Center, Yamasaki said “world trade means
world peace…the World Trade Center should, because of its importance, become a representation of man’s belief in humanity, his
need for individual dignity, his beliefs in the cooperation of men, and through cooperation, his ability to find greatness." Japan
Center, which also originally bore the moniker “Trade Center,” though hardly of the scale or international prominence of the World
Trade Center, can be considered an earlier echo of these sentiments, particularly when Yamasaki’s own ethnic heritage is
considered in relation to how the project was intended to reference the cultural identity of the neighborhood. Though the A1 phase
of urban renewal in the Western Addition was heavily criticized, Yamaskai’s design of Japan Center may be considered innovative
in its architectural reference to Japanese design reflecting the ethnic character of the neighborhood, and in its use by businesses
that would form a beneficial commercial link between Japan and the Japanese American community in San Francisco's Japantown.

Yamasaki once said: “I realize there is a danger of an architect getting involved in too many things for the sake of society. He is
tempted to forget his real job is beauty. “ Perhaps this was a commentary on his involvement with two mid-century urban renewal
projects that predated Japan Center, the Gratiot Urban Redevelopment Project in Detroit (1954) and the Pruitt-Igoe housing project
in St. Louis (1956). The Gratiot project was a 100-acre site on Detroit’s Lower East Side that was designated a slum area, cleared,
and rebuilt as a privately funded housing project. Studies found that it resulted in the dispersal of most of the area’s residents to
other slums, rather than resettlement within the new development – a situation that seems to be typical of many urban renewal
projects. Comparably, the Pruitt-Igoe project became known as a notorious example of the failings of urban renewal. Despite
innovative designs meant to improve living conditions, the complex became crime-ridden and eventually deserted. It also became
symbolic of government’s bureaucratic and ultimately unfair treatment of ethnic and lower class communities while attempting
broad solutions to real social and physical issues. Undertaken much earlier than Japan Center, these projects may have influenced
Yamasaki’s later design of Japan Center. Though commercially, rather than residentially oriented, Japan Center conscientiously
references cultural aesthetics and attempts to provide an open, useable indoor/outdoor environment – a trait evident in its ongoing
popularity and active usage.
B10. Significance (continued)

Japan Center has a unique place within the context of Yamasaki's portfolio, with links to public design, urban renewal, and international trade functions – all of which may be seen as overlapping phases of his work. Yamasaki's designs are both famous and infamous, demonstrating him to be an architect who was willing to take risks and who adapted from experience, providing a particularly complex set of references for Japan Center. Another of Yamasaki's works, the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles, built in 1966 (concurrent with Japan Center), is currently listed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 Most Endangered Places list, illustrating additional threats to Yamasaki's body of work. Though Japan Center has not been widely recognized in the way that the World Trade Center or the Pruitt-Igoe housing project were, it is one of the few remaining designs to uphold the contextual aspects of Yamasaki's body of work since neither Pruitt-Igoe nor the World Trade Center stand today.

Peace Plaza & Peace Pagoda

Peace Plaza, an urban open space situated between the Miyako and Kintetsu malls on a now-closed segment of Buchanan Street, provides the primary access to the mall complex from Post Street and Geary Boulevard. It lies across Post Street from the southern end of Buchanan Mall, resulting in a unified open space corridor of Peace Plaza and Osaka Way (formerly Buchanan Street between Post and Sutter Streets), and uniting the Japan Center mall with the village-like Buchanan Mall at the commercial center of Japantown. As originally designed, the Peace Plaza included a granite keyhole-shaped reflecting pool at the base of the Peace Pagoda, linear reflecting pools along the Plaza's north side, a covered walkway that spanned the north side of the plaza, and a large drum tower at the center of the plaza.

The Peace Pagoda, which stands at the southwest corner of the Plaza, was a gift from San Francisco's sister city, Osaka, Japan to symbolize eternal peace between Japan and the United States. It was designed by architect Yoshiro Taniguchi (1904-1979), a Japanese architect with an active practice in Tokyo. He was known as an avant-guard designer and is best known for his functionalist design of the Hydraulic Laboratory at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, which is regarded as the first Constructivist building in Japan. The design of the five-tiered pagoda was derived from a set of round pagodas that existed more than 1,200 years ago in Japan's ancient capital city of Nara. The pagoda is surmounted by a kurin, a thin, circular spire covered in rings. At the top of the spire is an ornamental gold ball with a flaming head called a honshu. An eternal flame was originally located within the pagoda, but has since been moved to a small glass enclosure behind the water feature on the west side of the plaza. The flame is 17 centuries old and came from the Sumida Shrine in Osaka, Japan. Takeso Shimoda, Japan's ambassador to the U.S. from 1967 to 1970, was responsible for the ceremonial lighting of the flame. The Peace Pagoda is surrounded by a stage where festival events are often held, including the Obon Festival, Aki Matsuri, and the Cherry Blossom Festival.

The Peace Plaza was renovated in 2000, due to drainage problems. The new design for the plaza was undertaken by Kenji Muorkami and eliminated the large covered walkway structure at the north side of the plaza. Other elements of the Peace Plaza were removed or altered at this time. Though the Peace Plaza is situated in an urban setting, natural elements with a distinctly Japanese aesthetic are incorporated into its design; cherry and plum trees border the plaza, which also features boulders and wood benches. The renovated Plaza was rededicated by Mayor Willie Brown in 2003.

Initially, the plaza was owned by a private real estate company known as National Braemar, but was then sold to private developer Sinclair Louie. Louie's plans to develop the open space were thwarted by community protest and the plaza was eventually purchased by the City and County of San Francisco.

Japan Center Occupants & Uses

When it first opened, Japan Center housed branches of prominent Japanese companies, which represented investment from abroad and an initial focus on relations with Japan, as the original name Japanese Cultural and Trade Center connotes. Kintetsu Enterprises of America was the Center’s key anchor until recently, owning and managing the Miyako Hotel and the Kintetsu and Miyako Malls. Kintetsu Enterprises was owned by the Kinki Nippon Railway, which was founded in 1944 and renamed Kintetsu Corporation in 2003. Based in Osaka, Kinki Nippon operated the largest private railway in Japan and entered the hotel business in 1968. Other interests originally occupying Japan Center included the Bank of Tokyo, a Nissan Motors Datsun Auto Showroom, a Hitatchi Ltd. Showroom, the Mistubishi Exhibition Center, Kinokuniya Bookstore, Kikkoman International (the American Branch of which was established in San Francisco in June 1957), the Kikkoman Cooking Center, and a branch of the Japan National Tourist Organization (an Independent Administrative Institution of the Japanese government). The Kinokuniya Bookstore was and is still located in the Kinokuniya Building, which was financed by the Kinokuniya Company Ltd. Kinokuniya Book Stores of America is the largest Japanese bookstore chain in the U.S. and a subsidiary of the largest bookstore chain in Japan. The company also owned the Webster Street Bridge.
B10. Significance (continued)
The Miyako Hotel, now known as Hotel Kabuki, is located at the east end of the Japan Center complex and was originally constructed by the Kinki Nippon Railway. It was run by the Western Hotels Company, which also operated other prominent San Francisco hotels like the St. Francis and the Sir Francis Drake. The Miyako's 156 rooms featured both American and Japanese style accommodations. The three-story block to the east of the hotel's main tower originally housed the Consulate General of Japan and Japan Emigration Service, further indicating the Center's early focus on bi-national relations; however, it was later made part of the hotel and remodeled to provide additional guest rooms.

The Kabuki Theater, now known as Sundance Cinemas, anchors the west end of the Japan Center complex. Originally intended to host Kabuki performances, it is now used as a standard movie theater. To serve the functions of a Kabuki venue, however, it was designed in a traditional 17th-century style and was thus the first authentic Kabuki theater in America. Its design incorporated a low, wide proscenium, a long ramp for stage entrances and exits, a revolving stage, and trap doors. The theater was originally presided over by Kunizo Matsuo, who brought plays from Japan. Matsuo specialized in presenting shin style Kabuki, which is a modernized form of the genre that is characterized by a faster pace, elimination of unnecessary dialogue, and the participation of women performers, who were traditionally banned from Kabuki. The theater also featured performances with Western overtones, like the Nippon Kagakidai, a 75-girl troop that put on a nightclub extravaganza, and Kabuki versions of western operas like Madame Butterfly. The theater's Western design elements included the incorporation of dining tables, where the audience could dine as they watched performances. The Kabuki Theater Restaurant only served Chinese and American food, as an agreement had been made not to compete with the Japanese restaurants in Japan Center.

Most businesses located within Japan Center today cater to a Japanese theme, attesting to the Center's success in maintaining a culturally-based commercial complex. Among these, a number have been identified as important Japanese American community establishments, a few of which have even been located in the mall since its opening. These include Kinokuniya Bookstore, May's Coffee Shop, the Ikenobo Ikebana Society of America, Kimochi Lounge, and Dentoh: Traditional Arts.

The Kinokuniya Bookstore has been located in the Kinokuniya Building since 1969. The Kinokuniya Corporation is one of the largest business and property owners in Japantown and has been instrumental in the development of commerce in the neighborhood. The corporation also sponsors many community festivals and events. The bookstore is the flagship store of Kinokuniya Corporation in America, which is the largest Japanese bookstore chain in both the U.S. and Japan. The store in Japan Center is the third largest Japanese bookstore in the U.S. Kinokuniya's merchandise consists of a wide range of books and media, seventy percent of which is Japanese-language. The bookstore is an active promoter of Japanese culture and customs in the U.S. and offers appearances and public readings by Asian American authors.

May’s Coffee Shop has been located in the Kintetsu Building since Japan Center was opened. The Kintetsu Corporation hired May Murata to run the coffee shop, which began with a limited menu of Japanese food and sembei (rice crackers), and after a year gave her full responsibility of the café, which took on her name at that time. In 1985, the café was expanded to provide more space within the mall and expand the café’s menu offerings. Today, it serves a truly Japanese American menu, including hamburgers and hotdogs, as well as udon, saimin noodles, spam musubi, Hawaiian shave ice, green tea ice cream and tai yaki (a sweet bean-filled pastry). May’s makes over one hundred fish-shaped tai yaki a day and ships much of their product to places with large Japanese American populations, like Seattle and Hawaii. The coffee shop has become a popular meeting place for many Japantown community members. The Japanese offerings on the menu are recipes inherited from May’s mother and father who operated a Japanese restaurant in San Mateo. Many of the Hawaiian items are the contribution of May’s daughter, Pearl, who now runs the coffee shop. A May’s Coffee Shop tradition was the annual celebration of motchisuki (New Years festival), which was observed from 1976 to 2001. During these celebrations, May’s gave away over one hundred pounds of mochi (rice cakes) to customers.

Also located in the Kintetsu Building is Dentoh, a non-profit organization dedicated to the appreciation and preservation of traditional Japanese culture, including arts, crafts and performing arts. It was opened in 2002, in conjunction with the annual Cherry Blossom Festival, and is already regarded as a significant cultural institution in Japantown. The organization sells art pieces and sponsors exhibitions and demonstrations by prominent artists from Japan. A small stage located within the organization’s space is used for Japanese dance lessons. The organization also maintains a small mikoshi or shrine that is carried during traditional Japanese festivals. Dentoh is one of the only shops in Japan Center that features traditional, rather than modern, elements of Japanese culture. It is also one of the few organizations that focuses on preserving traditional Japanese culture in the face of increasing modernization and globalization.

The American headquarters of the Ikenobo Ikebana Society of America has been located in the Kitetsu Mall building since 1968. It is an organization founded to promote the art of Japanese flower arranging and is a branch of the parent Ikenobo Society based in Kyoto, Japan. Ikebana is a traditional Japanese art that is over 500 years old. After World War II, many Japanese Americans expressed an interest in continuing the art form in the United States. In response, Sensei Ikenobo, a 45th generation ikebana master, established an office in San Francisco. Two visiting artists from Japan have been in residence every year and travel DPR 523L
B10. Significance (continued)
throughout the country to instruct. Today, the organization has 4,000 members and provides support for over forty chapters and groups throughout North and South America, sells ikebana supplies, and provides ikebana demonstrations and lessons.

Kimochi Lounge was established in 1971 as a non-profit, community-based senior care organization that reflects the importance of interaction with, and concern and respect for, older generations in Japanese and Japanese American culture. It was started by a group of Sansei (third generation Japanese Americans) who realized that many aging Issei (first generation) required assistance overcoming language and cultural barriers to access public services. Although the organization began operations in buildings that were eventually condemned and redeveloped, Kimochi soon established its first stable location on the Webster Street Bridge between the Kinokuniya and Kintetsu mall buildings. The Kimochi Lounge, as it became known, was a place for seniors to meet and exchange news. The organization has expanded into two other facilities in Japantown, including a former department store on Buchanan Mall, which serves as the organization’s headquarters, and a residential facility on Sutter Street; the Kimochi Lounge on the Webster Street Bridge remains an important element of the organization, housing a library, arts and crafts sales, and information outreach services. The organization currently provides support for over 3,000 Bay Area seniors, most of Japanese American ethnicity.

In addition to housing tenants for commerce and community functions, Japan Center also supports regular observances of community events, which reflect the culture of the Japantown community. These events include traditional festivals like Aki Matsuri (fall festival), Kodomo No Hi (Children’s Day Festival), Tango No Sekku (Boy’s Day, on which colorful carp streamers are flown over Peace Plaza), and the Cherry Blossom Festival. Also, the Kabuki Theater has served as the site for Day of Remembrance over Peace Plaza), and the Cherry Blossom Festival. Modern celebrations that recognize Japanese and Japanese American pop-culture also take place in and around Japan Center, like the Nihonmachi Street Fair and the Anime Costume Parade. Many businesses located in the mall sponsor such events, and the mall complex plays a physical role as a venue for such celebrations.

Evaluation
Japan Center is associated with several important trends and events that have affected the Japantown neighborhood and the Japanese American community, and it is also an example of culturally relevant design by a significant Japanese American architect. The development of Japan Center may be understood in relation to the growth of the post-war neighborhood and its culture during the period of urban renewal in Japantown, and it may also be recognized for the architecture of Minoru Yamasaki as architect. The development of Japan Center may be understood in relation to the growth of the post-war neighborhood and its culture during the period of urban renewal in Japantown, and it may also be recognized for the architecture of Minoru Yamasaki as architect. Japan Center still functions as a commercial shopping mall and open space plaza as it was originally designed and therefore retains strong integrity of association with its original use and function within the Japantown community. The mall complex retains integrity of location as it has never been moved. Its integrity of setting is also intact, as it remains in a generally commercial area surrounded by many other buildings that resulted from the period of urban renewal. Though some tenant improvements have resulted in minor cosmetic alterations to both interior and exterior storefronts, the original design and intent of the mall’s exterior elements and interior public spaces have undergone few alterations. The configuration and features of Peace Plaza have been changed since their initial construction (with the exception of the Peace Pagoda), but the general design intent of the urban open space within the Center is intact. Therefore the mall retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling.

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B10. Significance (continued)
The status code of 7N1 assigned to this site means that it may become eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places when it meets specific conditions. Specifically, the site needs to be reevaluated when it has achieved more than fifty years of age (at the time of this evaluation, the site had achieved significance within the past fifty years, and the requirement for establishment of exceptional significance pursuant to Criterion G had not been determined) and/or when sufficient perspective and research regarding the complex legacy of urban renewal in Japantown has been achieved (in order to fully understand the subject site as well as its relationship to other properties associated with the period). If determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the site is accordingly deemed eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources and for local listing. This property was not fully assessed for its potential to yield information important in prehistory or history, per National Register Criterion D.

B12. References (continued)
Japantown Task Force, Data Sheet: Dentoh, 12/3/04.
Japantown Task Force, Data Sheet: Japantown Peace Plaza, 9/20/04.
Japantown Task Force, Data Sheet: May’s Cafe, 12/2/04.