

Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE AUGUST 12, 2019

KINMON GAKUEN (GOLDEN STATE INSTITUTE, INC.)

Application No.: LBR-2018-19-065
Business Name: Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute, Inc.)
Business Address: 2031 Bush Street
District: District 5
Applicant: Richard Hashimoto, Board Member
Nomination Date: May 17, 2019
Nominated By: Supervisor Vallie Brown
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Kinmon Gakuen was founded as a Japanese language school in 1910 in Japantown. A core group of activists from the Japanese American Association established the organization to support educational opportunities for their children who were denied access to the public school system due to their race. The first location was a rented house at 2301 Bush Street. In 1918, a group of Japanese American citizen advocates met with the Japanese Consulate to make plans for a permanent building for Kinmon Gakuen. In 1924, Kinmon Gakuen legally became recognized as Golden Gate Institute, Inc., a State of California organization, and, in 1926, the building at 2031 Bush Street was completed.

Acts of violence and discrimination against Japanese Americans continued to escalate well into the 1940s. Leading up to World War II, tensions between the United States and Japan were steadily increasing, and Japanese language schools, including Kinmon Gakuen, were under intense scrutiny for their suspected involvement in "anti-American" activities and the assumption that they promoted a Japanese nationalist ideology. Soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States began to impression Japanese "enemy aliens" based on race. Under the authority of Executive Order 9066 signed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1942, "all enemy aliens and all persons of Japanese ancestry" were subject to military regulation. Following the signing of Executive Order 9066, Kinmon Gakuen was forced to cease operations, and its building was taken over by the United States military for use as a "processing" center where persons of Japanese descent were required to report before being detained and eventually deported to War Relocation Camps throughout remote locations in the Western United States.

African Americans began to occupy the housing stock in Japantown that had previously been occupied by the Japanese American community. The Booker T. Washington Community Service Center was formed in 1919 in response to the lack of access for African Americans to recreational and social services that white San Franciscans enjoyed. By 1942, it moved into the Kinmon Gakuen Building at 2031 Bush Street after the Japanese language and culture school was forced to close. In 1952, the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center transitioned into a new space at 800 Presidio Avenue, allowing for the full return of the building to Kinmon Gakuen. Kinmon Gakuen returned to its historic location at 2031 Bush Street in May of 1952.





SAN FRANCISCO
OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes, Kinmon Gakuen has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

2301 Bush Street from 1911 to 1927 (16 years)
2031 Bush Street from 1927 to Present (92 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, Kinmon Gakuen has contributed to the history and identity of the Japantown neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The school is associated with the Japanese language.
- On April 3, 2019, the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission unanimously approved the Kinmon Gakuen building as a Landmark Designation. The designation will be presented to the Board of Supervisors later this year for permanent status. The property is also located within the Japantown Cultural District. The Kinmon Gakuen building is significant for its association with the social, cultural and educational enrichment of Japanese Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century as the home of Japanese language and culture school, Kinmon Gakuen ("Golden Gate Institute"), from 1926 to the present. The organization was established in 1911, representing one of the earliest Japanese language schools established in the continental United States. Since children of Japanese descent were not allowed to attend American public schools, a core group of activists from the Japanese American Association gathered to establish an organization that would support and further educational opportunities for children who were excluded from attending public schools.
- In the 109-year history of Kinmon Gakuen, there have been numerous media and historical documents. Unfortunately, due to theft and accidental destruction of documents, most of the original records are no longer available. However, the Historic Preservation Landmark Designation Report dated April 3, 2019, lists an extensive number of books, reports, newspapers, and websites that speak about Kinmon Gakuen.
- The business is named in the Japantown Historic Context Statement.

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, Kinmon Gakuen is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.





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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute, Inc.) qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Japanese bilingual and bicultural services.
- Auditorium and social hall.
- Exhibits of Japanese art cultural demonstrations.
- The architectural character-defining features listed in the landmark designation report.

CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Japanese language and culture education.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute, Inc.) currently located at 2031 Bush Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Program Manager
Legacy Business Program



Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE AUGUST 12, 2019

KINMON GAKUEN (GOLDEN STATE INSTITUTE, INC.)

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. _____

Application No.: LBR-2018-19-065
Business Name: Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute, Inc.)
Business Address: 2031 Bush Street
District: District 5
Applicant: Richard Hashimoto, Board Member
Nomination Date: May 17, 2019
Nominated By: Supervisor Vallie Brown
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR KINMON GAKUEN (GOLDEN STATE INSTITUTE, INC.), CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 2031 BUSH STREET.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on August 12, 2019, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore





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OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

BE IT RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute, Inc.) in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute, Inc.):

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Japanese bilingual and bicultural services.
Auditorium and social hall.
Exhibits of Japanese art cultural demonstrations.
The architectural character-defining features listed in the landmark designation report.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute, Inc.) on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Japanese language and culture education.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on August 12, 2019.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes -
Nays -
Abstained -
Absent -





SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2018-19-065
Business Name: Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute, Inc.)
Business Address: 2031 Bush Street
District: District 5
Applicant: Richard Hashimoto, Board Member
Nomination Date: May 17, 2019
Nominated By: Supervisor Vallie Brown

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years? Yes No

2301 Bush Street from 1911 to 1927 (16 years)
 2031 Bush Street from 1927 to Present (92 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community? Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms? Yes No

NOTES: N/A

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: June 20, 2019

Richard Kurylo
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program



**Member, Board of Supervisor
District 5**



City and County of San Francisco

Vallie Brown

Friday May 17, 2019

Office of Small Business
Small Business Commission
City Hall, Suite 110
San Francisco, CA 94102

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to nominate Kinmon Gakuen, located at 2031 Bush Street, for the Legacy Business Registry Program.

Since 1911, Kinmon Gakuen has been dedicated to enriching the lives of children, Japanese immigrants and community members through education. Kinmon Gakuen took a radical approach by providing education to children of Japanese American immigrants who were not allowed to go to school in the United States in the beginning of the 20th century.

Today, Kinmon Gakuen operates as a language school committed to spreading Japanese traditions as well as the history of the center. By exposing youth and community members to Japanese culture, they aim to broaden the global perspective of members and youth. Kinmon Gakuen has always been a hub for Japanese Americans to gather and participate in cultural activities, political events and community organizing.

With the strong belief that Kinmon Gakuen will continue to build on its over 100 years of legacy, I elect to nominate the foundation for the Legacy Business Registry Program. For any additional questions about Kinmon Gakuen, Nikki Yoshikawa by email at: nikkiyoshikawa@gmail.com.

Should you have any further questions related to this letter, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office at (415) 554-7630 or BrownStaff@sfgov.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vallie Brown".

Vallie Brown
Supervisor, District 5
City and County of San Francisco

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:		
Golden Gate Institute, Inc. dba Kinmon Gakuen		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Board of Directors		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
2031 Bush Street San Francisco, CA 94115		((415))567-4383
		EMAIL:
		kinmonsf@hotmail.com
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
kinmongakuen.com		

APPLICANT'S NAME	
Richard Hashimoto	<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
Board Member	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	
[REDACTED]	
TELEPHONE:	
[REDACTED]	
EMAIL:	
[REDACTED]	

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):
1052108	

OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff	
NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
2301 Bush Street	94115	1911
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	1911 to 1927	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
2031 Bush Street	94115	Start: 1927
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Richard Hashimoto

5/10/2019



Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

KINMON GAKUEN (GOLDEN GATE INSTITUTE, INC.)

Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

Kinmon Gakuen was founded as a Japanese language school on May 2, 1910, in San Francisco's Japantown neighborhood. Due to children of Japanese descent not being allowed to attend public schools, a core group of activists from the Japanese American Association gathered to establish an organization that would support educational opportunities for their children.

In 1911, Kinmon Gakuen rented a house at 2301 Bush Street for the school's first location. The school was directed by Mr. Masayoshi Tamata, who was recommended for the position by Dr. Inazo Nitobe, who in addition to being a notable Japanese educational leader was a significant figure in Japan-United States relations.

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

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

The fundamental goal of Nisei (second generation Japanese) students was to master both the Japanese and English languages. Students and their parents understood the importance of mastering Japanese as a way to maintain culture and heritage. However, there was also a desire and sense of urgency for Nisei students to master the English language to create a bridge of understanding between the United States and Japan. English speech contests were held at the Kinmon Gakuen auditorium where Nisei students would compete against one another as masters of the English language. Kinmon Gakuen's building also served as a space where Japanese art and culture could be displayed and celebrated.

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

Outbreak of World War II

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

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

Tensions between the two international powers eventually collided. The Japanese Navy attacked American naval bases at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, marking the turning point when the United States officially entered World War II. Soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States began to impression Japanese "enemy aliens" based on race. Under the authority of Executive Order 9066 signed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1942, "all enemy aliens and all persons of Japanese ancestry" were subject to military regulation. Not only did Executive Order 9066 apply to Japanese immigrants, but also to American-born citizens of Japanese descent.

Kinmon Gakuen and Japanese American Internment

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

As Japanese Americans reported to 2031 Bush Street, they were forced to register and provide personal information about themselves and their family, and they were vaccinated as a safeguard to public health. Afterwards, they were placed on buses that took them to various assembly centers used as temporary detention camps. Japanese Americans remained in internment camps until 1945, when the war ended, and the United States released detainees and allowed for their return to the West Coast.

Growing African American Population in the Western Addition

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

In 1942, when Executive Order 9066 authorized the movement of all people of Japanese ancestry into internment camps, African Americans began to occupy the housing stock in Japantown that had previously been occupied by the Japanese American community.

Booker T. Washington Community Service Center

The Booker T. Washington Community Service Center was formed in 1919 in response to the lack of access for African Americans to recreational and social services that white San Franciscans enjoyed. It was founded by women organizing for increased social services for black families and youth. By 1942, it moved into the Kinmon Gakuen Building at 2031 Bush Street after the Japanese language and culture school was forced to close during Japanese Internment during World War II.

In 1952, the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center transitioned into a new space at 800 Presidio Avenue, allowing for the full return of the building to Kinmon Gakuen. The Japanese community had supported the fundraising efforts for Booker T. Washington's new building, which was also a new, purpose-built community facility.

Post-World War II

Kinmon Gakuen returned to its historic location at 2031 Bush Street in May of 1952. Although enrollment levels were not as substantial as they had been before the outbreak of World War II, 88 students still enrolled in courses upon the reopening of the building. Throughout the 1950s, Kinmon Gakuen continued to expand its programing and reinserted itself as a vital part of the Japantown community.

In 1952, the Director of Kinmon Gakuen, Mr. Koshi Suzuki began teaching an American citizenship class on the weekends, reaching an audience of about 70 students. Two years later

in 1954, Kinmon Gakuen language teachers expanded their services to include adult English classes. Other non-language programming included the beginning of the popular screening events of Japanese movies. Kinmon Gakuen used the auditorium every Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings to present Japanese films. The resurgence in programming and increased enrollment after the war coincided with the Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko visitation to Kinmon Gakuen in 1960.

To offset operating costs, in 1977, the auditorium was leased to Nihonmachi Little Friends preschool. In 2017, Nihonmachi Little Friends completed an expansion and moved to the new facility at 1830 Sutter Street, cancelling their lease.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

Soon after the signing of Executive Order 9066 on March 21, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Public Law 50, and the Kinmon Gakuen building was seized by the government to be used as a processing center for internment of Japanese Americans in San Francisco and ceased operations from 1942 to May 1952, when it returned to the Japanese Americans. Since then, Kinmon Gakuen has not ceased operations. Today, Kinmon Gakuen continues to teach Japanese language and culture one day a week (Saturdays). The building also leases a social hall to a karate school one day a week.

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

Under the 1937 Internal Revenue Service determination letter, Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute, Inc.) is a non-profit organization.

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

Kinmon Gakuen is a community based nonprofit organization that is governed by a board of directors. The school was originally funded by local government and the Japanese government so that children of Japanese descent received the proper education that was required since they were not allowed to attend public schools in San Francisco.

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation demonstrating the existence of Kinmon Gakuen for 109+ years is included in the Historical Preservation Landmark Designation Report and Legacy Business Registry application.

f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The historic resource status of the building at 2031 Bush Street is classified by the Planning Department as Category B, Unknown / Age Eligible, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act. The building, constructed in 1926, was identified in a reconnaissance level survey for the National Register by not individually evaluated. On April 3, 2019, the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission unanimously approved Kinmon Gakuen as a Landmark Designation. The designation will be presented to the Board of Supervisors later this year for permanent status.

CRITERION 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

Kinmon Gakuen is significant for its association with the social, cultural and educational enrichment of Japanese Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century as the home of Japanese language and culture school, Kinmon Gakuen ("Golden Gate Institute"), from 1926 to the present. The organization was established in 1911, representing one of the earliest Japanese language schools established in the continental United States. Since children of Japanese descent were not allowed to attend American public schools, a core group of activists from the Japanese American Association gathered to establish an organization that would support and further educational opportunities for children who were excluded from attending public schools.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

Kinmon Gakuen has had an enormous impact in the Japanese American and African American communities. The building not only served as a school for children of Japanese descent, it served as the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center during the internment of Japanese Americans. It is believed that this allowed the community center to save enough money to purchase property of their own at its current location at Presidio Avenue and Sutter Street.

After the war ended, Kinmon Gakuen began to show foreign movies to raise the much needed funds to sustain the operations of the facility. In 1977, the auditorium was leased to Nihonmachi Little Friends, a bilingual-bicultural preschool. However, in March 2017, the

preschool moved into its new facility and the auditorium now sits vacant. There are plans for another preschool to move into the facility, which is currently being negotiated.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

In the 109 year history of Kinmon Gakuen, there have been numerous media and historical documents. Unfortunately, due to theft and accidental destruction of documents, most of the original records are no longer available. However, the below were taken from the San Francisco Planning Department, Historic Preservation Landmark Designation Report dated April 3, 2019.

Books and Reports

- Bell, Shelley, *A Legacy of Victory: History of the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center 1920 to the 1970s*.
- Graves, Donna and Page & Turnbull. *Japantown Historic Context Statement*. San Francisco: Page & Turnbull, 2011.
- California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Historic Preservation, *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California*, 1988.
- Cary and Co. *Building Evaluation/ Feasibility Study Kinmon Gakuen 2031 Bush Street*, 2018.
- The Japantown Task Force, Inc. *Images of America, San Francisco's Japantown*, 2005.
- Tim Kelley Consulting, The Alfred Williams Consultancy, VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting, *San Francisco African American Citywide Historic Context Statement 1579-2014*. San Francisco: Tim Kelley Consulting, The Alfred Williams Consultancy, VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting, 2015.
- Kiyama, Henry, *The Four Immigrants Magna*, Stone Bridge Press, 1931.
- Fujie, Ron, *The Preservation of the Japanese Heritage: A History of Japanese Language Schools in California and the Life of Koshi Suzuki*, (n.d.)
- History of the Golden Gate Institute, *100th Anniversary: Golden Gate Institute Japanese Language and Cultural School 1911-2011*, 2011.
- Morimoto, Toyotomi, *Japanese Americans and Cultural Continuity: Maintaining Language Through Heritage*, Taylor and Francis, New York, 1997.
- Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Seventy- Seventh Congress, *Report on Japanese Activities*, February 28, 1942.
- Wang, ShiPu, *The Other American Moderns: Matsura, Ishigaki, Noda, Hayakawa*, Penn State University Press, 2017.
- Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924*, New York: The Free Press, 1998, 1, 51-52.

Newspapers and Periodicals

- The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, "Finding Aid to War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement, 1942-1945 circa 1941-1947."
- San Francisco Chronicle, "Booker T. Washington Center Dedicated ... for Use of All Races," August 17, 1952.
- Harper's Weekly, "For Heaven's Sake Do Not Embarrass the Administration," November 10, 1906.
- San Francisco Chronicle, Leffingwell, E.C., "San Francisco's Mayor Wants Exclusion Act to Bar the Japs," April 1, 1905.
- San Francisco Chronicle, "Local Head of Negro Group to Speak Today," August 20, 1944.
- San Francisco Chronicle, "More on the Western Addition Radio Program," November 30, 1942.
- San Francisco Chronicle, "S.F. Housing Officials Will Meet Today," January 6, 1943.
- Nichi Bei, Taguma, Kenji G., "Kinmon Gakuen celebrates 100 years of Japanese Language Instruction," December 8, 2011. <https://www.nichibei.org/2011/12/kinmon-gakuen-celebrates-100-years-of-japanese-language-instruction-2/>

Websites

- California Japantowns, "Kinmon Gakuen 2031 Bush Street," accessed January 22, 2019. <http://www.californiajapantowns.org/sf/kinmongakuen.html>
- Desnno. "Evacuation or Exclusion? Japanese Americans Exiled," Discover Nikkei Japanese Migrants and Their Descendants," accessed January 22, 2019. <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2011/2/22/evacuation-or-exclusion/>
- Densho Digital Repository "Anti-Immigration Sentiment" Accessed January 23, 2019. <http://ddr.densho.org/>
- Kinmon Gakuen "About Kinmon Gakuen" Accessed January 22, 2019. <http://www.kinmongakuen.com/about-kinmon-gakuen/>
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On April 3, 2019, San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission unanimously approved Kinmon Gakuen as a Landmark Designation. The designation will be presented to the Board of Supervisors later this year for permanent status. Once we have received the approval, Kinmon Gakuen board of directors plans to celebrate the designation with a plaque and a ceremony for City officials and the community commemorating the milestone. The board shall also pursue listing on the National Registry of Historic Places.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

The building was designed by noted Bay Area architect William C. Hays, a professor of architecture at U.C. Berkeley who designed numerous educational facilities throughout California. Hays designed Kinmon Gakuen in the Mediterranean Revival style, which was a popular design aesthetic of the period, particularly for educational facilities in the Bay Area. In addition to U.C. Berkeley, the Hays collection consists of a wide variety of designs documenting his career including U.C. Davis, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz.

Kinmon Gakuen has also been graced by visits from royal families from Japan:

- 1931 — Prince and Princess Takamatsu
- 1933 — Prince and Princess Kaya
- 1960 — Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko

Other very notable people associated with Kinmon Gakuen are:

- **Koshi Suzuki**, who had been the principal of Kinmon Gakuen before the war, since 1918, assumed his position at the helm of the school when it resumed operations in its temporary space beginning in 1949.
- **Robert B. Flippin**, was the executive director of the Booker T. Washington Community Center and served as the treasurer of the San Francisco branch of the NAACP.
- **Vori Wada**, a Japanese American who worked at the Booker T. Washington Community Services Center following incarceration and became the first Japanese American elected as a UC Board of Regents. Mr. Wada later became the Executive Director of the Buchanan YMCA.
- **Dr. Emily Murase**, a doctor of psychology and a former student of Kinmon Gakuen. Ms. Murase is the Executive Director of San Francisco Department on Status of Women.
- **Paul Osaki**, Executive Director of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California. Mr. Osaki was a former student of Kinmon Gakuen.
- **Jon Osaki**, Executive Director of Japanese Community Youth Council. Mr. Osaki is brother to Paul and also attended Kinmon Gakuen.

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

Kinmon Gakuen has always been dedicated to the community providing bicultural and bilingual services for higher education. The facility is available for use to the community; however, current building code restrictions limits the use and does not meet ADA requirements. It is hoped that the landmark designation and being listed on the National Registry will assist in funding improvements to bring the building up to current codes.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

Kinmon Gakuen is located in historic San Francisco's Japantown. It is the oldest and one of three remaining Japantowns in the United States. The others are located in San Jose and Los Angeles. At one time, there were 43 Japantowns in California, and San Francisco's Japantown consisted of over 36 square blocks. Besides typical cultural businesses, these communities usually had Japanese language schools for the immigrant's children because they were prohibited from public schools. After World War II and the internment of the Japanese, most of those communities declined significantly and even more following urban renewal. Through the perseverance of the community, Japantown is now left with about 12 square blocks, but continues to struggle with developers and gentrification.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

As previously mentioned, on April 3, 2019, the Kinmon Gakuen building has been approved by the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission as a historical landmark. Not only is it oldest Japanese language school in San Francisco, the building served as the registration and processing center for people of Japanese ancestry during World War II before they were sent to concentration camps further documented by photos taken by renown photographer, Dorothea Lange.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

Since the landmark designation, there are no intentions to sell or close the building. The board of directors plans to preserve the building and to provide the necessary upgrades to the facility to expand its programs and offer the space(s) to other community groups. The building is ideal for classes, lectures and social gatherings.

However, if the funds are not raised to implement with the necessary renovations to make the building accessible and seismically safe, there could be risk of the school closing. Should this happen, it would remove a major educational center from the community and deny everyone the opportunity to learn how to read, speak and write Japanese. There is a long standing history of people in the community who have attended Kinmon Gakuen, and whose children and grandchildren attended the school. A closure would also deny the various cultural groups that use the facility today to continue their classes and workshops (i.e., karate, ikebana, calligraphy, etc.).

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

Kinmon Gakuen continues to provide Japanese bilingual and bicultural services for the past 109 years (except during World War II). The school's auditorium and second floor social hall have always been used to exhibit Japanese art, cultural demonstrations and social gatherings. Currently, the school leases space to a karate school three days a week and one of the classrooms to a Japanese flower arranging (ikebana) workshop once a month. During the New Year celebration (Oshogatsu), the board of directors, students and parents get together for mochitsuki (rice pounding ceremony) and a master calligrapher delivers his annual proverb by demonstrating with a large sumi-e brush.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

Kinmon Gakuen plans to provide the much needed building upgrades so that it can expand its current bilingual bicultural services that includes providing the necessary wireless internet service for the entire building, electronic devices such as computers, laptops, projectors, etc. to meet the demand today's students need in order for higher education.

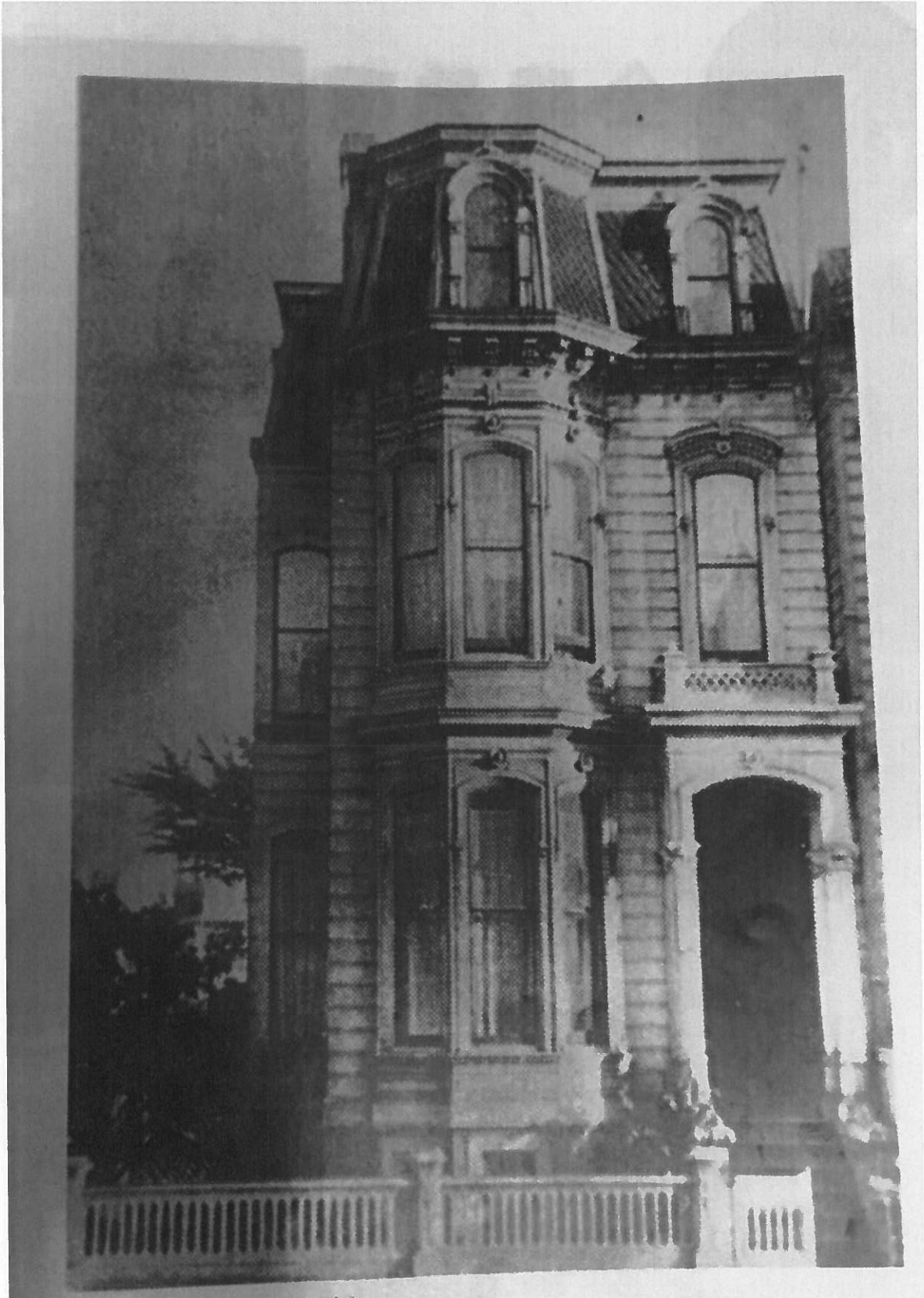
c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

Whenever a building, site, object or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 Landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property, including all primary exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials. For the Kinmon Gakuen Building, these are identified in the building's Landmark Designation Case Report available at this website:

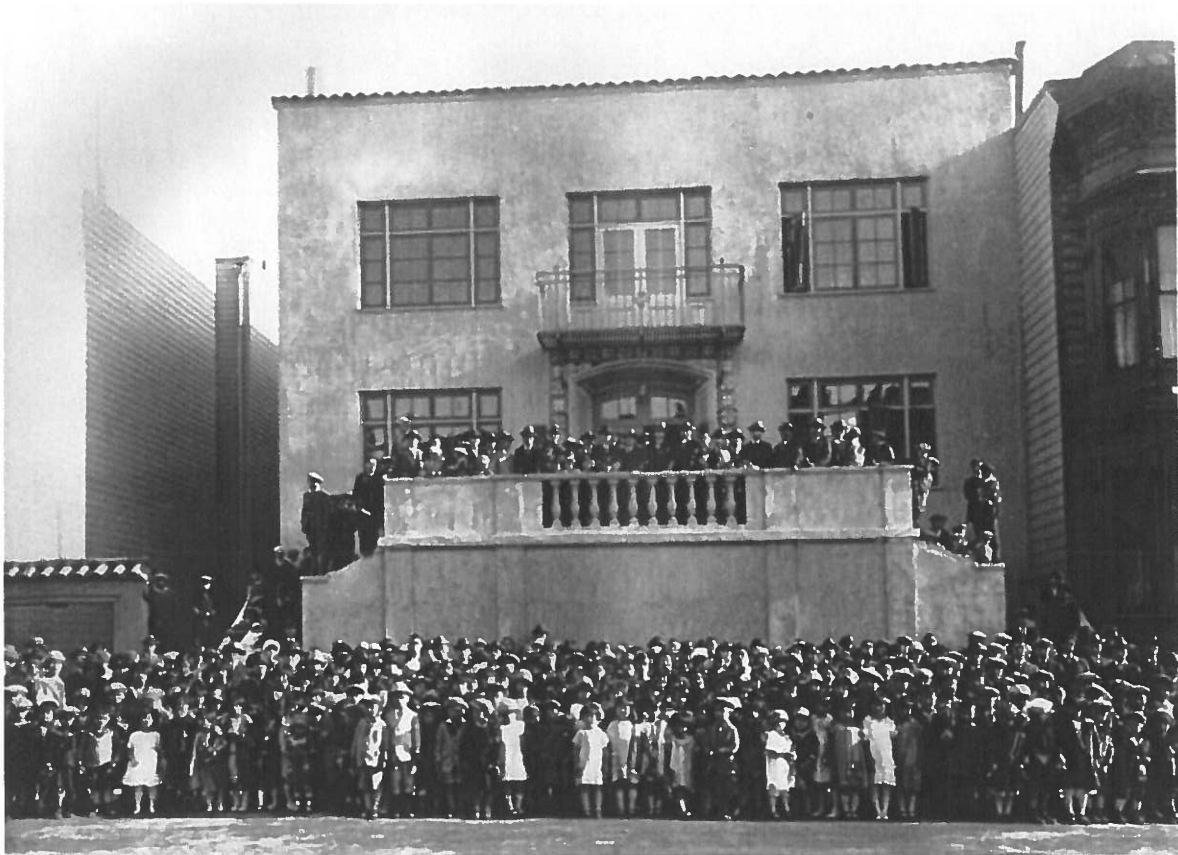
<http://commissions.sfplanning.org/hpcpackets/FINAL%20HPC%20INITIATION%20PACKET%20-%20kinmon%20gakuen.pdf>

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Not applicable. The current ownership has not changed since its founding.



Original Kinmon Gakuen at 2301 Bush Street



Kinmon Gakuen in 1927



Japanese Americans waiting to be processed at the outbreak of World War II



Vaccinations following the outbreak of World War II



A bus outside of Kinmon Gakuen taking Japanese Americans to relocation centers.



Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko visit in 1960



金門學園

0041

金門學園
Golden Gate Institute
Institute for Language & Cultural Studies
1000 S. Van Ness St.
San Francisco, CA 94109







Current Photos



Interior classroom



Auditorium







CONSULATE
GENERAL
of JAPAN
San Francisco

在サンフランシスコ
日本国総領事館

Local

第46回
小学日本語お話し大会
Japan





Students sing the school song at the 100th anniversary celebration of the establishment of Kinmon Gakuen



Golden Gate Institute (Kinmon Gakuen) in San Francisco Receives 2011 Foreign Minister's Commendation

On October 29, Consul General Hiroshi Inomata presented the Golden Gate Institute (or Kinmon Gakuen), one of the oldest Japanese language schools on the US west coast, with Japan's Foreign Minister's Commendation as the Institute celebrated the 100th anniversary of its establishment.

The Institute was established in 1911 by the first generation Japanese Americans who were urged to establish a school so their children could learn Japanese as well as the Japanese cultural heritage. It was at the time when the number of Japanese immigrants in the U.S. was becoming exceedingly high, and local schools would close the doors to the immigrant's children. Since then, the Institute has played an important role in providing Japanese American students with the education in language, culture and its values for a hundred years (except seven years during and after the Pacific War). In recent years, the Institute has also been serving as a foreign language school that teaches the Japanese language to non-Japanese students. The Commendation was to recognize and appreciate these contributions of the Institute to the Japanese American community for a century.

Consul General Inomata expressed his respect in his congratulatory remarks for the Institute for the long-standing dedication to the community in the field of education and his hope that the Institute would continue to play an important role in the promotion of the Japanese language education in the Bay Area.

The Commendation was presented by the Consul General to Mrs. Shizu Mihara; in attendance were 150 guests including Dr. Emily Murase, SF Education Commissioner, Rev. Yoshiomi Ogui, Eddie Moriguchi, Chairman of the California Japanese Benevolent Society, Dana Lewis, President of the Japan Society of Northern California, Shigeru Kimura, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Golden Gate Institute, Board Directors and teachers, former teachers and students, friends and supporters of the Institute and friends and supporters. The Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco hereby expresses its sincere congratulations to the Golden Gate Institute on the commendation.

Nichi Bei

Kinmon Gakuen celebrates 100 years of Japanese language instruction

December 8, 2011 by [KENJI G. TAGUMA, Nichi Bei Weekly](#)

Kinmon Gakuen, also known as the Golden Gate Institute, celebrated 100 years of Japanese language and culture education recently in San Francisco's Japantown. In a gathering of former students, teachers and administrators on Oct. 29, community members also helped to celebrate the historic milestone at the Hotel Kabuki in San Francisco's Japantown.

"We are dedicated to continuing the efforts of our predecessors," said Shigeru Kimura, the current board chair of Kinmon Gakuen, who described the event as one of the largest alumni gatherings ever.

Like dozens of schools of Japanese instruction across the state, institutions like these have been vital to reinforce language and culture for generations.

But it was not uncommon for children to have complained about spending a chunk of their leisure time in yet more school, however.

"I have to confess, as a young person growing up in San Francisco, attending Japanese school was not my preferred way to spend Saturday mornings," Kinmon Gakuen alumni Emily Murase recalled in a letter published in the program booklet. "However, the Japanese language and cultural education I received opened up so many doors for me."

"We surely complained about having to go to Nihongo Gakko (Japanese school)," Kinmon Gakuen alumni Grace Horikiri told the Nichi Bei Weekly. "But looking back now I am sincerely grateful to my parents for giving us the opportunity to go."

Some who quit early have regretted giving up on it later in life. Yet for others, the experience presented many fond memories.

"At the time, like most of my classmates, we went because our parents wanted us to go," said Horikiri, who attended the school from 1967 to 1977. "Also, back then, there were no afterschool programs, so really Kinmon served as not only an extension of learning, but for all of us kids to play and hang out in J-Town."

"I vividly recall our calligraphy (shodo) lessons," said Murase. "The finality of putting a large brush coated with jet black ink to the thinnest possible sheet of paper at once inspired fear of and awe for the art."

“The fondest memories are the friendships that developed throughout those years,” said Horikiri, a graphic designer and president of the Nihonmachi Street Fair. “I am still in contact with many of my Kinmon Gakuen friends.”

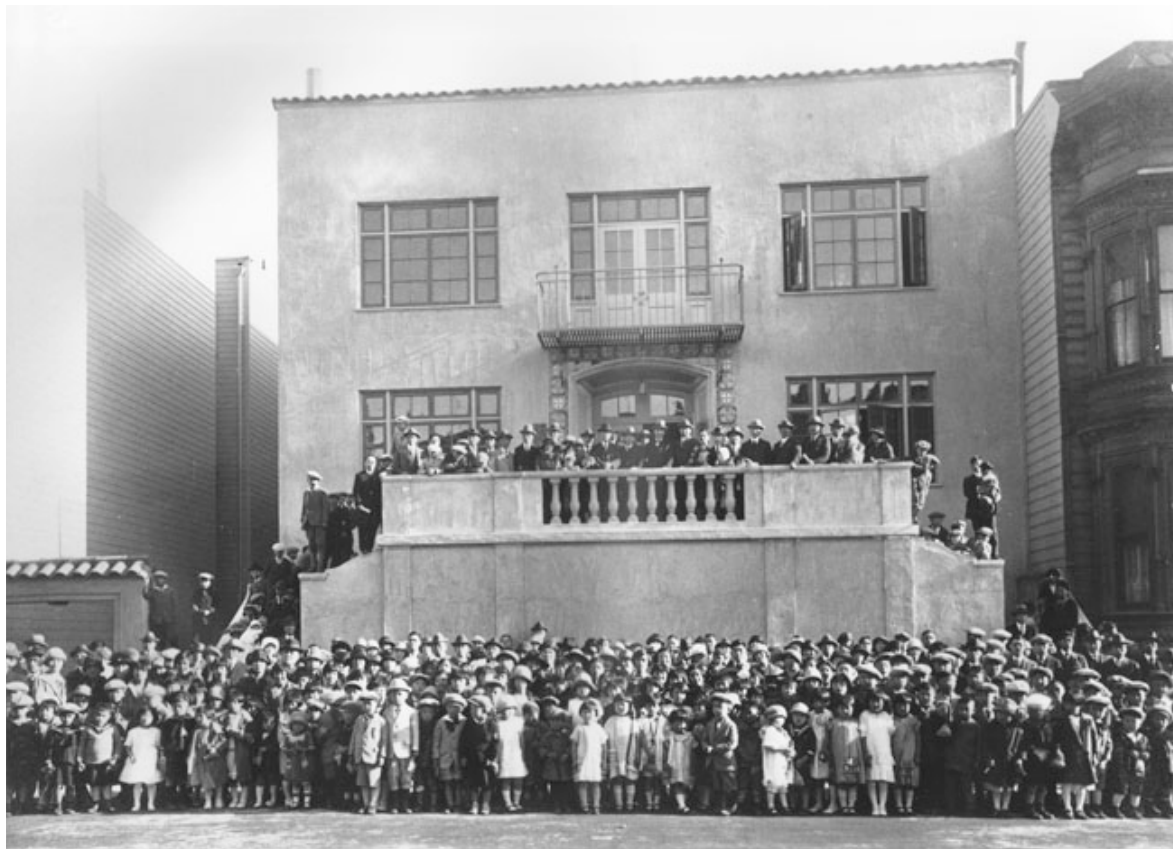
Early History

Though not the first Japanese language school in the United States — a school founded in Seattle in 1902 bears that distinction — Kinmon is certainly one of the oldest.

According to a historical account provided by the school, a core group of the Japanese American Association gathered to establish a Japanese educational organization for their children on May 2, 1910. The next month, a meeting was held to establish an operating plan for Kinmon Gakuen.

On Jan. 18, 1911, the property at 2031 Bush St. was rented as a school building. The next month, Dr. Inazo Nitobe, an educational leader in Japan who became famous for his role with the League of Nations, recommended Masayoshi Kamata of Japan to be the first director of the school.

A grand opening ceremony was held on April 15, and classes officially began on April 17 with 12 kindergarteners, 12 preschoolers, and 21 other students.



OLD SCHOOL — The Kinmon Gakuen building in 1927. courtesy of Kinmon Gakuen

The old structure was raised in 1925, and a dedication for the new building was held on April 11, 1926 with more than 1,000 in attendance, the history of the institution noted. The school merged with Kyowa Institute in 1935, and was closed because of the outbreak of World War II.

During the war, the Kinmon Gakuen property was occupied by the Booker T. Washington Center, and classes resumed next door in October of 1948 with 32 students. In May of 1952, the Booker T. Washington Center moved to Presidio Avenue, and Kinmon relocated to the main school building at 2031 Bush St.

Citizenship classes were started in 1952, and by February of 1954, there were 88 students enrolled at the school. Adult classes began in December of that year.

Some 176 students participated in the year-end ceremonies in June of 1960. That year, the Crown Prince and Princess of Japan visited the school.

Today, the school has 43 students, who gathered at the 100th anniversary to sing the school's official song onstage. Fumiye Maeda and Kevin Shimizu led the group, and made short speeches in Japanese.

Alumni Remembrances

Perhaps amongst the most accomplished alumni of the school, Murase, the first Japanese American elected to the San Francisco Board of Education, spoke in both Japanese and English of the school's impact on her.

"I had fabulous teachers," said Murase, who presented a proclamation for the school on behalf of Mayor Ed Lee. "It enabled me to do many things in life."

Murase attended the school from the first to third grade, until her family went to live in Japan for a year.

"I received my foundation at Kinmon," she told the Nichi Bei Weekly. "I learned basic writing (hiragana, katakana, simple kanji).

"Fluency in Japanese changed my life," Murase said. "I spent my junior year of college studying at Tsuda College in Tokyo. ... I eventually earned a first class certification in Japanese from the Japanese Ministry of Education and, after receiving a master's in international relations at UC San Diego, spent three years working at AT&T Japan and later landed a position in the first Clinton White House where I staffed U.S.-Japan trade negotiations."

In addition to serving on the San Francisco School Board, Murase is the executive director of the city's Department on the Status of Women, and in that capacity she often hosts visiting delegations, sometimes from Japan.

Other alumni, like Horikiri, also found the lessons learned at Kinmon to be useful later in life.

“Since my parents do not speak English fluently, having that strong knowledge of Nihongo has helped us not only communicate with them, but also serve as a translator for them especially during doctor’s appointments,” said Horikiri, whose mother Mutsuyo Horikiri served as principal of the school from 1981 to 1993.

“As we Nisei grew up we were required to attend Japanese school after our regular public school,” wrote Stanley Kanzaki in a reminiscence of his time at the school. “I wasn’t too keen on going but it had some future advantages.”

Kanzaki, who traveled across country from New York to attend the 100th anniversary celebration, attended the school from 1937 to 1941. He noted that the school was a historical backdrop in the wartime incarceration of the Japanese American community.

“As a result of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s unjust E.O. 9066,” he stated, “the entire Japantown population were forcibly ordered to appear in front of Kinmon Gakuen on Bush Street to get on the buses for the first step of the illegal incarceration of Japanese Americans into concentration camps.”

Eighty-nine-year-old Mitsuko Kawashiri, of Novato, Calif., was among the oldest alumni in attendance. She attended the school for one year before leaving for Japan at the age of 8.

Teaching the Language

Some former teachers and principals were on hand to recall their time at the Golden Gate Institute.

“We were able to educate many students,” said Sakiko Kanamori, 87, a former teacher and principal who taught from 1960 to 1974.

The school presented Kanamori, the fifth director of the school, and Mutsuyo Horikiri, the 10th director, with plaques of appreciation.

“Children of many different backgrounds were able to study together,” added Mamiko Uchida, another former teacher who started teaching second grade 10 years ago. “It was a wonderful place to be a teacher.”

Foreign Minister’s Commendation

Consul General of Japan in San Francisco Hiroshi Inomata, who presented Kinmon Gakuen with the Foreign Minister’s Commendation on behalf of the government of Japan, reflected upon the beginnings of the school.

“At the time of Kinmon Gakuen’s establishment in 1911, the Japanese immigration to the United States was reaching its peak,” said Inomata. “So, too, was the anti-Japanese sentiment.”

Inomata added that its opening “must have been looked at as a guiding light of hope.”

<https://www.nichibei.org/2011/12/kinmon-gakuen-celebrates-100-years-of-japanese-language-instruction-2/>

According to Inomata, some 5,000 graduates have passed through Kinmon Gakuen's doors, as the institution "continued to play an important role in transmitting language."

Hiroshi Haruki, the president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California, said the Japanese business community appreciates Kinmon Gakuen because it helps to foster better U.S.-Japan relations.

While recalling its past, the Golden Gate Institute also cherished its historic milestone, and the many who have passed through its doors.

"I look around and see many illustrious alumni, and I'm happy that we were able to accomplish so much," said current Kinmon Gakuen Principal Shizu Mihara, in closing the celebration.

For more information about Kinmon Gakuen, call (415) 567-4383 or visit www.kinmongakuen.org.

Nichi Bei

School's in session in S.F.'s Japantown

May 25, 2017 by [TOMO HIRAI, Nichi Bei Weekly](#)



BUILDING A FUTURE IS NOT CHILD'S PLAY — Nihonmachi Little Friends celebrated their new building's opening May 19. At left is their new classroom. At right is the rooftop play area. photos by Tomo Hirai/Nichi Bei Weekly

Following some five years of planning, fundraising and construction, Nihonmachi Little Friends opened its doors to its new Sutter Street building May 19 during a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by several dozen of those involved with the preschool.

Founded in 1975 to provide community-based Japanese bilingual and multicultural childcare, the preschool located in San Francisco's Japantown plans to use its new building, formerly the school's playground lot, as a replacement for the preschool classroom the organization currently rents from Kinmon Gakuen, which is located around the block on Bush Street. While the school had operated out of the historic Bush Street building since 1977, it was asked to vacate several years ago.

Cathy Inamasu, executive director of NLF, had been trying to find a suitable replacement, but could not find an existing location that would fit their needs.

"We wanted to stay in the area, but you need to have outdoor space for childcare programs to be licensed by the state," Inamasu said. When the school could not find a suitable location, Inamasu said she began asking if a rooftop playground could be developed. "We looked at the playground lot and we asked, 'hmm, how many children can we fit here?'"

Following a study of other rooftop playgrounds and a solicitation for proposals, NLF settled on a proposal by HKIT Architects of Oakland, Calif. to build an annex next to their current headquarters. The new location expands the program's maximum capacity from 80 students to 91 and began holding classes May 22.

The new building's construction was no easy feat, especially given the historic significance of the existing building. The Japanese YWCA was built in 1921 and designed by California's first female architect, Julia Morgan. The former YWCA building was initially financed and built by *Issei* women, who were not

allowed to own property and had the YWCA hold it “in trust.” Nihonmachi Little Friends moved into the building in 1985 as a tenant. When the YWCA tried to sell the building in 1996, the Soko Bukai, a consortium of San Francisco Japantown’s Christian churches, sued to keep the building within the Japanese American community. The settlement between the YWCA and Soko Bukai resulted in Nihonmachi Little Friends becoming the new stewards of the building in 2002.

Tad Sekino, senior architect at HKIT, said his firm, Nihonmachi Little Friends and the City of San Francisco spent a considerable amount of time working together to ensure the new building did not compromise the historic integrity of what is now the Issei Women’s Building, all while making the old historical building ADA accessible with the installation of an elevator bank in the new annex.

“This is a Julia Morgan building next door, so we had to be very careful about (not) damaging or designing to alter anything there,” he said. The new building’s design is simpler, so as not to overpower either the neighboring Issei Women’s Building or the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California next door. “To try to keep the two buildings from having their identity threatened, we made this building a lot more simple on the front facade. It now ties together both buildings,” Sekino said.

Inside, the walls are painted white and several parents and board members described the interior as “peaceful.” Kaz Naganuma, a graphic designer who is working with the school, commended the new building’s use of light colors in its interior.

“You don’t need anything *gasa gasa*, because the whole point is, the kids are the energy, they have the bright clothes, they have all the noise, all the things that kids are all about,” he said. Naganuma said he will meet with the staff to work on how to decorate the new classroom in the coming weeks.

While considerable planning, fundraising and time was required for the new building, members of the school’s leadership said the investment was well worth it.

“It’s an exciting idea that we can actually own our own property and have control,” Inamasu said. “It gives us permanence, and the board felt that this is a direction we should go because we want to be here for generations to come. It helps build the Japantown community because it brings families here; we really feel we are an integral part of the community.”

“Cathy put the idea on the table, and I think none of us had fathomed the thought, but as soon as people said it, it was very easy for all of us to jump on board and go with it,” said NLF board member Joyce Oishi. She said the preschool being able to complete the construction was “remarkable,” especially during a construction boom in San Francisco. She added that supporting the school was an easy choice, even if her children are already college age. “NLF is a very easy choice to invest time and talent because the recipient of everyone’s good will are those wonderful little kids.”

With the construction done, NLF now turns its focus to fundraising to pay off the construction loan. Inamasu said they have raised more than \$2 million since launching the Plant a Seed Capital Campaign in early 2012, which aimed to raise \$3.5 million. Many of the individual donations came from former students’ parents.

Board Chair Adrienne Shiozaki Woo said she has seen the program grow in the 20 years she has sat on the board of directors.

<https://www.nichibei.org/2017/05/schools-in-session-in-s-f-s-japantown/>

“It’s a community program. When your kids are in preschool, ... connecting with other kids in the program, you become a family. You keep in touch even after you’re out of preschool,” she said. She said her son, who attended Little Friends in the early 1990s, still hangs out with a handful of friends from preschool.

Shiozaki Woo has been on the board since the mid-1990s, through the YWCA lawsuit and the first capital campaign to retire the mortgage in 2005. With the completion of the new annex, she said it might be time to pass on the reigns. “Maybe I’ll step off the board now and focus on the (capital) campaign,” she said. “All the handwork is done and ready for the next generation to step in; the program is in very good hands.”

Nihonmachi Little Friends plans to hold an open house for the public Saturday, July 8 from 1 to 3 p.m. The preschool will conduct tours of its new facilities and provide light refreshments. For more information, visit www.nfchildcare.org.

Kinmon Gakuen

2031 Bush Street



Kinmon Gakuen is one of the oldest structures and cultural organizations in San Francisco's Japantown. The school currently operates a weekly Japanese language education program, and houses Nihonmachi Little Friends, a bilingual day care center. The building has undergone several renovations since its inception. It has six mid-sized rooms, and includes a kitchen, a social hall, a library, and an auditorium.

In the late 1800s, a core group of San Francisco Japanese associations gathered to address the community's need for a Japanese educational system, motivated largely by an 1895 school exclusion law passed by the San Francisco Board of Education, which made it difficult for children of Japanese ancestry to attend public schools. Through fundraising and donations, Kinmon Gakuen (literally translated, "Golden Gate School") was officially opened on January 18, 1911, offering elementary through high school-level courses.

On March 20, 1925 architect William C. Hays' building design was approved and the building was completed on April 11, 1926. Many Japanese Americans in San Francisco were ordered to report to Kinmon Gakuen to register for the evacuation on April 24, 1942, and the site served as the gathering place for one of the main contingents of evacuees to the Tanforan Assembly Center. During World War II, the school was shut down and re-opened in 1949. For several decades Kinmon Gakuen served not only as a school, but as a cultural educational center and as a movie house on Saturdays showing Japanese films, plays and other community events. At its height, over 400 students attended the school. Kinmon Gakuen also holds the distinction of having been visited by many members of the Imperial Family of Japan. Kinmon Gakuen is now only open on Saturdays, but remains as a center for community programs and events and is a historical landmark for the Japanese American community.

[CLOSE WINDOW](#)



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Landmark Designation Case Report

Hearing Date: February 6, 2019
Case No.: 2017-012291DES
Project Address: 2031 Bush Street (aka The Kinmon Gakuen Building)
Zoning: RM-3 (Residential-Mixed, Medium Density)
Block/Lot: 0676/027
Property Owner: Golden Gate Institute
2031 Bush Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith – (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
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PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS & SURROUNDING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

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

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS ACTIONS

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

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

OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

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

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

APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS

ARTICLE 10

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

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK CRITERIA

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

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

PUBLIC / NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

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

PROPERTY OWNER INPUT

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

STAFF ANALYSIS

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

SIGNIFICANCE

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

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

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

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

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

UNDERREPRESENTED LANDMARK TYPES

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

INTEGRITY

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

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

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

BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

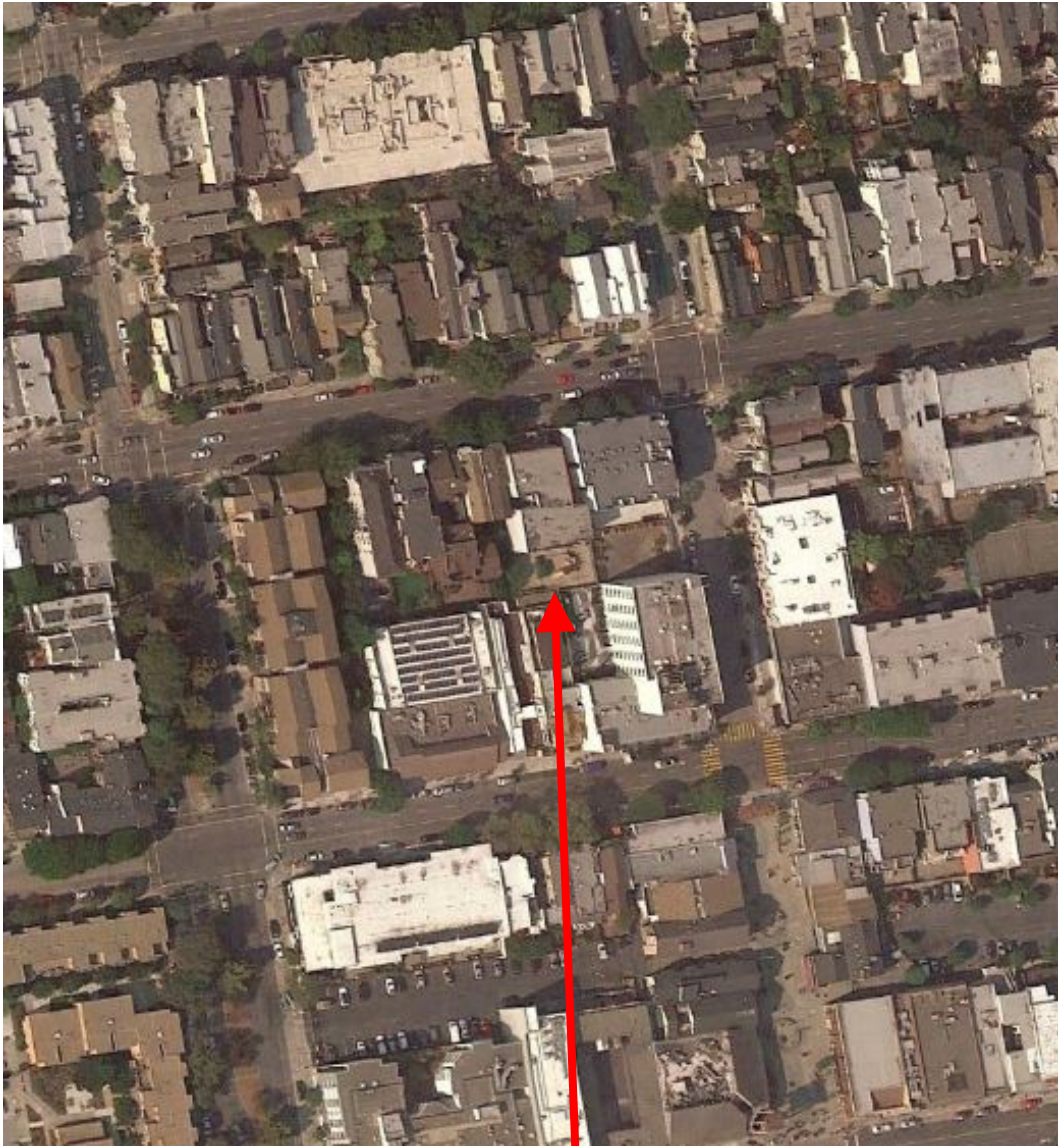
The proposed Landmark site consists of Assessor's Parcel Block. No. 0676, Lot No. 027.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

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

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

Aerial Photo



SUBJECT PROPERTY



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

Emily M. Murase, PhD
77 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 101, #2020
San Francisco, CA 94102
info@emilymurase.com

9 March 2019

President Aaron Jon Hyland
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103-2479

VIA E-MAIL

Dear President Hyland:

I am writing in support of designating Kinmon Gakuen a building of historic and cultural significance to the heritage of San Francisco. According to research sponsored by the California State Library, there were 43 "Japantowns," hosting 3,500 businesses and organizations, across the state of California before World War II. Now, only three remain, in Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Francisco, largely due to the mass incarceration of Japanese and Japanese Americans during World War II that uprooted these communities, put an estimated 120,000 people behind barbed wire in remote prison camps, many of whom who later dispersed rather than return to their home communities. The naked racism and unfettered economic opportunism that motivated the forced removal of these families and communities are well-documented. What is not well-documented are the losses that Japanese Americans have suffered, spanning generations, the loss of income and property, the loss of business and civic leadership, the loss of pride in Japanese culture, identity, and, importantly, language speaking ability.

A unique exception to this history of losses is the San Francisco Japantown institution known as Kinmon Gakuen ("Golden Gate Institute") which has, since 1911, provided Japanese language instruction to many generations of Japanese Americans. I was a student at Kinmon Gakuen in elementary school. Nobody likes Saturday school. While I was in a classroom with an imposing, old school (very strict) Japanese teacher (Ms. Kanamori, Ms. Ohno, and Ms. Tanaka) at Kinmon Gakuen, my friends slept in, had a leisurely breakfast, and spent most of their Saturday mornings watching Saturday morning cartoons, including "Scooby-Doo, Where are You?" and "Super Friends."

As much as I hated Saturday school, the Japanese language instruction I received came in handy when my father, a professor of social work at San Francisco State University, took our family to Japan for a year-long sabbatical. My mother, a native of Japan, insisted that, rather than attend the American School in Japan like all the other expatriate kids, my siblings and I enroll in a local

public Japanese elementary school. Thanks to our Kinmon Gakuen teachers, my siblings and I managed to get through a year of school in Japan.

This year living in Japan changed the trajectory of my life. Due to the wartime incarceration, most Japanese Americans distanced themselves from their Japanese cultural heritage and language. Having a Japanese mother and the childhood experience of living in Japan led me to pursue fluency in Japanese. I studied Japanese at Presidio Middle School and Lowell High School and won local Japanese speech contests. I also studied Japanese at Bryn Mawr College and was afforded an expenses paid year abroad at Tsuda College, Bryn Mawr's sister school in Japan. I eventually earned certification at the highest level of fluency by the Japanese Language Proficiency Test administered by the Japan Foundation. After graduating with a master's degree in Pacific International Affairs from UC San Diego, I was recruited to work for AT&T Japan. In the midst of historic trade deficits with Japan, I successfully concluded \$30 million in sales of American technology to the Japanese telecommunications giant Nippon Telephone & Telegraph Corporations.

Kinmon Gakuen has had a similarly life-changing effect for generations of students since 1911 and remains an important institution for the promotion of the Japanese language. I urge the Commission to adopt a support position for the landmarking of this important building. With only three remaining Japantowns, opportunities to confer this status on entities of historic and cultural significance in the Japanese American community are extremely limited. I rely on your leadership to help us preserve this community treasure.

Yours sincerely,

Emily M. Murase

Emily M. Murase, PhD

Cc: Vice President Diane Matsuda
Commissioner Kate Black
Commissioner Ellen Johnck
Commissioner Richard Johns
Commissioner Jonathan Pearlman
Commissioner Andrew Wolfram

CONSULATE GENERAL OF JAPAN

275 BATTERY STREET, SUITE 2100
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94111

TELEPHONE: (415) 780-6000
FAX: (415) 767-4200

March 18, 2019

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

Dear Historic Preservation Commissioners:

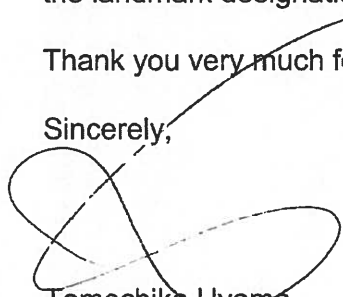
On behalf of the Government of Japan, I am writing to you today in support of Landmark Designation for Kinmon Gakuen (literal translation: Golden Gate Institute) in San Francisco's historic Japantown.

Kinmon Gakuen was established in 1911 for Japanese children who were discriminated from enrolling in American schools. In 1926, with the help of local Japanese businesses and government, the school completed construction of the new school. In 1941-42, at the onset of World War II, the building was used to process people of Japanese ancestry before they were relocated into concentration camps. The school resumed operations after the war ended and continues even today to offer Japanese language classes one day a week.

Japan and San Francisco have been steadfast partners for many years now and I am committed to both preserving and enhancing the deep cultural and historical ties between us. The Kinmon Gakuen building itself is one of only a few structures that remain from the pre-war and pre-redevelopment periods. It has promoted and helped sustain the Japanese language and culture for thousands of children in San Francisco over the decades. It is clear that the building has an enormous and historic past that should be preserved and I strongly recommend that you support the landmark designation.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned above the printed name.

Tomochika Uyama
Consul General of Japan in San Francisco



February 4, 2019

Mr. Aaron Jon Hyland, President
Historic Preservation Commission
400 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Kinmon Gakuen Landmark Designation

Dear President Hyland and Members of the Historic Preservation Commission:

On behalf of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC), I would like to submit our letter of recommendation and convey our wholehearted support for the Landmark Designation of Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute) in San Francisco's Japantown.

Kinmon Gakuen has been a pillar in our Japantown community since its establishment and the construction/completion of its existing building in 1926. Its historic significance as an educational, cultural, social and community institution is one that deserves landmark recognition, as it has survived through decades of our community's adversity and is one of only a few building that remains from the pre-redevelopment and pre-World War II (WWII) periods.

In addition to preserving the Japanese language and culture for thousands of children over the years, it is also a sad reminder for older community members of the injustices that occurred during WWII that were captured in images by photographer Dorthea Lange after the signing of Executive Order 9066. The photos are of Japanese Americans waiting by armed military to enter Kinmon Gakuen for processing and of detainees as they were boarding buses and leaving as they were sent to assembly and incarceration centers.

Personally, as a child growing up, I attended the Japanese language school, movies with my Nisei (second generation) grandmother in the downstairs hall and Nisei Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) potlucks and gatherings with my family. I have fond memories of Kinmon as a bustling center for people of all generations.

In closing, I hope you will strongly consider and approve the Landmark Designation of Kinmon Gakuen as a vital piece of our Japanese American and Japantown historical and cultural existence in San Francisco.

Sincerely,

Lori Matoba
Deputy Director



JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE

日本町の経済発展・計画・保存

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING & PRESERVATION OF JAPANTOWN

January 31, 2019

Dear Historic Preservation Commissioners:

The Japantown Task Force, Inc. board of directors voted unanimously to approve Golden Gate Institute (Kinmon Gakuen) to be on the landmark designation list.

Kinmon Gakuen was established in 1911 for Japanese children who were discriminated from enrolling into American schools. In 1926, with the help of local Japanese businesses and government, the school completed construction of the new school.

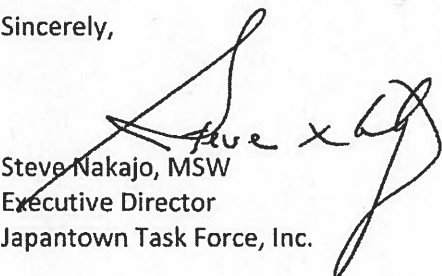
In 1941, at the onset of World War II, the building was used to process people of Japanese ancestry before they were relocated into concentration camps.

During this dark time, the school was closed and later entrusted to Booker T. Washington Community Center (BTWCC). It is believed that this allowed BTWCC to accumulate funds to purchase its own building at their current site on Presidio Avenue.

After the war had ended, the school resumed operations and continues to operate Japanese language classes one day a week.

For these reasons, the building has an enormous historic past that should be preserved and we urge you to join us in supporting the landmark designation.

Sincerely,


Steve Nakajo, MSW
Executive Director
Japantown Task Force, Inc.

GRACE HORIKIRI

1935 22nd Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 • 415-867-1318 • ghorikiri@me.com

Aaron Jon Hyland, President
Historic Preservation Commission
1 Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 400
San Francisco, CA 94109

Re: 2017-012291DES Landmark Designation

Dear President Hyland,

I am writing to you in support of the Landmark Designation for the historic Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute) building located at 2013 Bush Street, in San Francisco's Japantown.

I like many other Japanese American children attended Kinmon Gakuen during our youth. The education I received and the many memories of that time remains an important part of my life. My late mother, Mutsuyo Horikiri was part of the parent teacher association and later served as the principle. During her tenure Kinmon Gakuen celebrated their 80th year. She took pride in representing the school and made sure that our community knew the importance of this cultural treasure in Japantown.

If the building could speak, it would take us all on a historic journey that exemplifies the commitment of our Issei's (first generation) and how their legacy has continued throughout the schools 108 year history.

As the current Executive Director of the Japantown Community Benefit District, to be able to speak "nihongo" (Japanese) has been a great asset in order to communicate with our Japanese speaking community. What I learned at Kinmon Gakuen has definitely prepared me to serve our community in the best way I can.

I ask that Kinmon Gakuen receives landmark designation so that it may be preserved and protected today and for our community's future.

With deep appreciation,



Grace Horikiri



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

July 27, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Frye:

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

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

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

Your cooperation and assistance are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

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

cc: John Rahaim
Andrew Wolfram
Kinmon Gakuen Board of Directors

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



2012 Pine Street
San Francisco, CA
94115

Tel: (415) 202-7900
Fax: (415) 921-1841
www.jcyc.org

January 18, 2019

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

Dear Commissioners:

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Jon Osaki, consisting of stylized initials and a surname.

Jon Osaki
Executive Director

Filing Date: June 20, 2019
Case No.: 2019-013289LBR
Business Name: Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute, Inc.)
Business Address: 2031 Bush Street
Zoning: RH-3 (Residential, House, Three-Family) Zoning District
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0679/001
Applicant: Richard Hashimoto, Board Member
2301 Bush Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
Nominated By: Supervisor Vallie Brown
Located In: District 5
Staff Contact: Shelley Caltagirone - (415) 558-6625
shelley.caltagirone@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Jeff Joslin – (415) 575-9117
jeff.joslin@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Kinmon Gakuen was founded as a Japanese language school in 1910 in Japantown. A core group of activists from the Japanese American Association establish the organization to support educational opportunities for their children who were denied access to the public school system due to their race. The first location was a rented house at 2301 Bush Street. In 1918, a group of Japanese American citizen advocates met with the Japanese Consulate to make plans for a permanent building for Kinmon Gakuen. In 1924, Kinmon Gakuen legally became recognized as Golden Gate Institute, Inc., a State of California organization, and, in 1926, the building at 2031 Bush Street was completed.

Acts of violence and discrimination against Japanese Americans continued to escalate well into the 1940s. Leading up to World War II, tensions between the United States and Japan were steadily increasing and Japanese language schools, including Kinmon Gakuen, were under intense scrutiny for their suspected involvement in "anti-American" activities and the assumption that they promoted a Japanese nationalist ideology. Soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States began to impression Japanese "enemy aliens" based on race. Under the authority of Executive Order 9066 signed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1942, "all enemy aliens and all persons of Japanese ancestry" were subject to military regulation. Following the signing of Executive Order 9066, Kinmon Gakuen was forced to cease operations and its building was taken over by the United States military for use as a "processing" center where persons of Japanese descent were required to report before being detained and eventually deported to War Relocation Camps throughout remote locations in the Western United States.

African Americans began to occupy the housing stock in Japantown that had previously been occupied by the Japanese American community. The Booker T. Washington Community Service Center was formed in 1919 in response to the lack of access for African Americans to recreational and social services that white San Franciscans enjoyed. By 1942, it moved into the Kinmon Gakuen Building at 2031 Bush Street after the Japanese language and culture school was forced to close. In 1952, the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center transitioned into a new space at 800 Presidio Avenue, allowing for the full return of the

building to Kinmon Gakuen. Kinmon Gakuen returned to its historic location at 2031 Bush Street in May of 1952.

The business is located on the southwest corner of Bush and Steiner streets in the Japantown neighborhood. It is within a RH-3 (Residential, House, Three-Family) Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1910.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes. Kinmon Gakuen qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. Kinmon Gakuen has operated in San Francisco for 109 years with one break in operations caused by exceptional circumstances. Soon after the signing of Executive Order 9066 on March 21, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Public Law 50, and the Kinmon Gakuen building was seized by the government to be used as a processing center for internment of Japanese Americans in San Francisco and ceased operations from 1942 to May 1952, when it returned to the Japanese Americans. Since then, Kinmon Gakuen has not ceased operations.
- ii. Kinmon Gakuen has contributed to the history and identity of the Japantown neighborhood and San Francisco.
- iii. Kinmon Gakuen is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

Yes. The school is associated with the Japanese language.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

Yes. Kinmon Gakuen is significant for its association with the social, cultural and educational enrichment of Japanese Americans in San Francisco during the twentieth century as the home of Japanese language and culture school, Kinmon Gakuen ("Golden Gate Institute"), from 1926 to the present. The organization was established in 1911, representing one of the earliest Japanese language schools established in the continental United States. Since children of Japanese descent were not allowed to attend American public schools, a core group of activists from the Japanese American Association gathered to establish an organization that would support and further educational opportunities for children who were excluded from attending public schools.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

No. However, On April 3, 2019, the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission unanimously approved Kinmon Gakuen as a Landmark Designation. The designation will be presented to the

Board of Supervisors later this year for permanent status. The property is also located within the Japantown Cultural District.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

Yes. The business is named in the Japantown Historic Context Statement.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. In the 109-year history of Kinmon Gakuen, there have been numerous media and historical documents. Unfortunately, due to theft and accidental destruction of documents, most of the original records are no longer available. However, the Historic Preservation Landmark Designation Report dated April 3, 2019 lists an extensive number of books, reports, newspapers, and websites that speak about Kinmon Gakuen.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 2031 Bush Street

Recommended by Applicant

- Japanese bilingual and bicultural services
- Auditorium and social hall
- Exhibits of Japanese art cultural demonstrations
- The architectural character-defining features listed in the landmark designation report

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution No.

HEARING DATE: JULY 17, 2019

Case No.: 2019-013289LBR
Business Name: Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute, Inc.)
Business Address: 2031 Bush Street
Zoning: RH-3 (Residential, House, Three-Family) Zoning District
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0679/001
Applicant: Richard Hashimoto, Board Member
2301 Bush Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
Nominated By: Supervisor Vallie Brown
Located In: District 5
Staff Contact: Shelley Caltagirone - (415) 558-6625
shelley.caltagirone@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Jeff Joslin - (415) 575-9117
jeff.joslin@sfgov.org

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
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CA 94103-2479

Reception:
415.558.6378

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415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR KINMON GAKUEN CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 2031 BUSH STREET, BLOCK/LOT 0679/001.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on July 17, 2019, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission** hereby recommends that Kinmon Gakuen qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission** hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Kinmon Gakuen.

Location(s):

- *2031 Bush Street*

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- *Japanese bilingual and bicultural services*
- *Auditorium and social hall*
- *Exhibits of Japanese art cultural demonstrations*
- *The architectural character-defining features listed in the landmark designation report*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations** are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission** hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2019-013289LBR to the Office of Small Business July 17, 2019.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: