



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: February 26, 2024

ON THE BRIDGE RESTAURANT

Application No.: LBR-2023-24-005
Business Name: On The Bridge Restaurant
Business Address: 1581 Webster Street, #206
District: District 5
Applicant: Emi Bertha Nakamura, Assistant Manager
Nomination Date: September 25, 2023
Nominated By: Supervisor Dean Preston
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

On The Bridge Restaurant is an iconic Japanese restaurant located in Japantown. Opened in 1992, the restaurant was one of the first in San Francisco to specialize in yōshoku-style food, a fusion of Japanese and European cuisines. Today, they are best known for their Shinjuku-style chicken stock curry, beef stock curry, and yōshoku-style “wafu” pastas, along with their offerings of Japanese beer and sake.

On The Bridge Restaurant was opened in 1992 by spouses Mitsuhiro Nakamura and Yolanda Nakamura. Mitsuhiro is Japanese and Yolanda is Salvadorian. The two still own and operate the business today, along with help from their three daughters.

On The Bridge Restaurant attracts a diverse clientele of both locals and tourists; many customers share an appreciation for and curiosity about Japanese culture. This makes the restaurant a place for learning, embracing, and celebrating. According to the owners, “On The Bridge Restaurant is harmoniously located on a bridge connecting two essential malls, which hold a variety of Japanese-themed shops while being a bridge to Japanese culture where people can watch anime, read manga, learn about the various beers and sake from Japan, and eat yōshoku-style cuisine.” It is a true cultural connector in San Francisco.

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, On The Bridge Restaurant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

1581 Webster Street, #206 from 1992 to Present (32 years)

CRITERION 2

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

Yes, On The Bridge Restaurant 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:

Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org





- The business is associated with Japanese cuisine, specifically Shinjuku-style chicken stock curry, beef stock curry, and yōshoku-style “wafu” pastas.
- On The Bridge is located on the iconic Webster Street bridge in the Kinokuniya building in the heart of Japantown. Although it is a Category B (Unknown/Age Eligible) building, the building has important historical associations with the controversial redevelopment of the Western Addition as well as the presence of Japanese culture in San Francisco. In 2015, the unadopted Neighborhood Commercial Corridors Survey rated the building as “Does not appear significant under Criterion C/3 (Architecture/Design).” The building is within the boundaries of the ongoing San Francisco Citywide Cultural Resources Survey.

While the business itself is not mentioned in a historic context statement, the Japantown Historic Context Statement mentions the Redevelopment-era construction of the Japantown malls.

- On The Bridge Restaurant has been mentioned in the media numerous times, including articles in 7x7, the San Francisco Chronicle, Eater San Francisco, and KQED.
- With regard to racial and social equity, On The Bridge Restaurant is a family-owned business run by Japanese and Salvadorian owners. It is an important part of Japantown’s cultural heritage, and it is especially important as one of the first restaurants in San Francisco to specialize in yōshoku-style dishes, such as curries, cutlets, and Japanese-style hamburgers. On The Bridge Restaurant gives back to its community by donating gift cards to the Japanese Bilingual Bicultural Program’s annual auction and by donating meals to the San Francisco Police Department in 2020.

CRITERION 3

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

Yes, On The Bridge Restaurant is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that On The Bridge Restaurant 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:

- Yōshoku-style Japanese cuisine.
- Offerings of Japanese beer and sake.
- Anime film and television show collection for patrons to enjoy.

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.

- Restaurant featuring Japanese cuisine.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include On The Bridge Restaurant currently located at 1581 Webster Street, #206 in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

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Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____

February 26, 2024

ON THE BRIDGE RESTAURANT

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Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for On The Bridge Restaurant, currently located at 1581 Webster Street, #206.

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 on 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 February 26, 2024, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes On The Bridge Restaurant 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 On The Bridge Restaurant.

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Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Yōshoku-style Japanese cuisine.
- Offerings of Japanese beer and sake.
- Anime film and television show collection for patrons to enjoy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain On The Bridge Restaurant on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Restaurant featuring Japanese cuisine.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on February 26, 2024.

Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

Legacy Business Program

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City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
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Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2023-24-005
Business Name: On The Bridge Restaurant
Business Address: 1581 Webster Street, #206
District: District 5
Applicant: Emi Bertha Nakamura, Assistant Manager
Nomination Date: September 25, 2023
Nominated By: Supervisor Dean Preston

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

1581 Webster Street, #206 from 1992 to Present (32 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: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: January 24, 2024

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
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DEAN PRESTON

September 25, 2023

Office of Small Business
Attn: Legacy Business Registration Application
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: *Letter of Nomination for On the Bridge to the Legacy Business Registry*

Dear Mr. Kurylo:

I am writing to nominate On the Bridge, a Japantown staple known for its Yoshoku cuisine, to the Legacy Business Registry.

For 31 years, On the Bridge has provided Japantown with its unique cuisine and blend of Japanese culture and San Francisco spirit. Located in the oldest Japantown in the United States, On the Bridge does not only serve food, it also provides tourists and locals with a chance to experience an authentic manga kissaten-style dining that provides a comforting ambiance.

Mitsuhiro and Yolanda Nakamura, owners of On the Bridge, are a proud interracial couple, and their menu reflects a blend of cultures. Chef Nakamura is a pioneer in fusion cooking, providing customers with menu items like 23 different kinds of pasta and famous Shinjuku-style curries.

On the Bridge is part of Japantown's cultural fabric. Chef Mitsuhiro has participated in demonstrations of Shorinji Kempo, a form of Japanese martial arts, at the Cherry Blossom Festival for years. He has also served as a mentor for individuals with desires to travel to Japan, providing community members and customers with an education and appreciation of Japanese culture and traditions. They have demonstrated their commitment and involvement to the Japantown community through their annual donation of gift certificates to the Japanese Bilingual Bicultural Program's annual auction and meal donations to community serving organizations.

In addition to their popularity in Japantown, notable people like Chris Hart, a famous artist in Japan, Patti Smith, punk rock icon and frequent customer, baseball players, and Japanese variety show hosts have all dined at On the Bridge. Their extensive selection of Japanese sake and beer

attract award-winning bartenders and regular customers alike. Their dedication to the promotion of Japanese goods has earned them the Japanese Food Supporter Certificate, given out by the Japan External Trade Organization and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, On the Bridge lost 90 percent of their business due to its location in the interior bridgeway that connects the Japan Center's West Mall and Kinokuniya building. Despite going days without sales, Chef Mitsuhiro refused to give up, motivated less by money and more by a love of his craft and community. The resilience of On the Bridge, and many of the impacted small businesses in the neighborhood, is why Japantown is among citywide leaders in post-pandemic success.

My office sincerely appreciates the resilience of On the Bridge Restaurant and their commitment to Japantown and Japanese culture, and I am honored to nominate On the Bridge Restaurant to the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,



Dean Preston
District 5 Supervisor



Legacy Business Registry Application



Business Information

Business name: On The Bridge Restaurant

Business owner name(s): Mitsuhiro Nakamura and Yolanda Nakamura

Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business

Current business address: 1581 Webster Street, #206, San Francisco, CA 94115

Telephone: (415) 922 - 7765 **Email:**

Mailing address (if different than above):

Website: <http://www.onthebridgesf.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SFOnTheBridge> **Twitter:**

7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN): 0 9 1 4 1 6 9

Do any of these describe your business? (select all that apply)

Requires at least 51% of the business be owned, operated, and controlled by the business designation below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Immigrant-Owned Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Owned by Person with a Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LGBTQ+-Owned Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran-Owned Business |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minority-Owned Business* | <input type="checkbox"/> Woman-Owned Business |

**Minority is defined as one or more of the following racial or ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*

Contact Person Information

Contact person name: Emi Bertha Nakamura

Contact person title: Assistant Manager

Contact telephone: () - **Contact email:**

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.

Original San Francisco address: **Zip Code:**

Is this location the founding location of the business? (Y/N):

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other Address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Applicant Disclosures

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. A business deemed not current 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 grants through the Legacy Business Program.

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.

Name: Emi Nakamura

Signature:



Date: 11/13/2023

ON THE BRIDGE RESTAURANT

Written Historical Narrative

INTRODUCTION

a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?

On The Bridge Restaurant sells Japanese food and drinks. On The Bridge values embracing the unique, weird vibes that one can only find in San Francisco. They are family owned restaurant with a Japanese papa and Salvadorian mama who have been passionately running the business since 1992 with their three daughters.

Chef Mitsuhiro Nakamura, a.k.a. the papa of the restaurant, has been studying Japanese sake and beers to one day become a sake sommelier with restaurant mama Yolanda Nakamura studying by his side. On The Bridge Restaurant offers a variety of sake and beer that share the beauty of different prefectures in Japan in hopes to take folks on an adventure with every bottle. If you don't know where to begin, don't hesitate to ask their staff. Cheers!

b. Describe whom the business serves.

On The Bridge Restaurant is located in Japantown, one of San Francisco's tourist attractions, but the restaurant serves both tourists and locals alike. The general similarities of the customers who frequent the restaurant are people who have traveled to Japan before, people who appreciate and respect Japanese culture, and people who want to learn about the diversity within Japanese culture. It is a place of learning, embracing, and celebrating.

c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.

Shinjuku-style chicken stock curry, beef stock curry, and yōshoku-style "wafu" pastas.

CRITERION 1: The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years

a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.

On The Bridge Restaurant was founded by spouses Mitsuhiro Nakamura and Yolanda Nakamura on September 22, 1992. It has been located in the storefront at 1581 Webster Street, #206, since it opened.

Mitsuhiro is Japanese and Yolanda is Salvadorian. They met at City College of San Francisco and enjoyed learning English together while getting to know the city. Mitsuhiro and Yolanda decided to start a business together because it was a dream of his to open a restaurant in San

Francisco. They decided on yōshoku-style cuisine because this is the cuisine Mitsuhiro was passionate about and reminded him of home.

On The Bridge Restaurant is situated literally on the Webster Street Bridge that crosses between the West Mall and the Kinokuniya Mall of the Japan Center Malls, hence the business' name.

“Besides describing the restaurant's physical location in the mall, the name ‘On the Bridge’ also represents the link that its yoshoku style dishes make between Japanese and European cuisines. Chef Nakamura says he was the first Bay Area chef to specialize in this style of fusion cooking, which traces its roots back to 1868, when Emperor Meiji first welcomed Western ideas as helpful for Japan’s progress. Some non-Japanese diners may be unfamiliar with yoshoku’s comforting standbys, but these are the dishes that Japanese mothers often make for their children: curries, cutlets, Japanese-style hamburgers, omu-rice (omelet stuffed with fried rice) and fish roe–studded spaghettis.”¹

Mitsuhiro and Yolanda’s children are involved in the business, and show up at the restaurant on occasion, especially during festivals. Their youngest daughter manages the restaurant’s social media accounts as well.

b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.

1992 to Present: Mitsuhiro Nakamura; Yolanda Nakamura

c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.

On The Bridge Restaurant has never closed down since it opened in 1992 and even managed to remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic. The business receives a lot of support from family, friends, staff, community members, and customers.

CRITERION 2: The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community

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

On The Bridge Restaurant is “an eccentric, family-run restaurant that is indeed on the bridge between Japan Center’s (Kinokuniya) and West Malls, and is known as much for its anime film and TV show collection as its menu of fusion foods like Japanese spaghetti and okonomiyaki

¹ “At Japantown Legacy Businesses Benkyodo and On the Bridge, Resilience is on the Menu,” by Anna Mindess, KQED, May 5, 2021, <https://www.kqed.org/arts/13896729/benkyodo-mochi-on-the-bridge-sf-japantown-covid>.

pizza.”² The restaurant is famous for its Shinjuku-style Chicken stock curry, beef stock curry, and yōshoku-style “wafu” pastas. The business is also known for its famous “Loco moco,” which is traditionally a Hawaiian dish. People do not go to On The Bridge Restaurant for sushi, tempura, or teriyaki. The regulars understand what yōshoku cuisine is.

For those not in the know, yōshoku (洋食, western food) in Japanese cuisine refers to a style of Western-influenced cooking. These are primarily Japanized forms of European dishes often featuring Western names. It is an example of fusion cuisine.³

On The Bridge Restaurant supports the Japanese Bilingual Bicultural Program. In addition, Co-owner Mitsuhiro Nakamura has mentored many people who wanted to travel to Japan, learn about Shorinji Kempo (a Japanese martial art), and study Japanese. He and Yolanda Nakamura have also been a model to many people that an interracial marriage and unity can blossom into wonderful things such as their business, On The Bridge Restaurant.

b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?

Many significant people have dined at On The Bridge Restaurant over the years, including athletes and celebrities. One of the regulars, Chris Hart, is now a famous artist in Japan. Currently, punk rock icon Patti Smith frequents the restaurant whenever she is in town for her concerts. Baseball athletes and Japanese variety show hosts have dined at the restaurant as well. They even have award-winning bartenders who have been regulars and enjoy the restaurant’s diverse selection of Japanese sake and beer.

On The Bridge Restaurant co-owner Mitsuhiro Nakamura has participated in Japantown’s Cherry Blossom Festival over the years demonstrating Shorinji Kempo, a Japanese martial art.

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

On The Bridge Restaurant donates gift certificates to the Japanese Bilingual Bicultural Program annual auction to support the education of Japanese culture. The business also donated meals to the San Francisco Police Department in 2020. The business owners educate customers on the diversity within Japanese culture.

d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?

On The Bridge Restaurant has been referenced in the media. Following are some notable examples:

² “Patti Smith Is Obsessed With a Quirky Restaurant in Japantown,” by Caleb Pershan, Eater San Francisco, January 23, 2019, <https://sf.eater.com/2019/1/23/18193157/patti-smith-sf-japantown-restaurant-on-the-bridge>.

³ Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Y%C5%8Dshoku>.

- *“Modern Guide to Japantown: Kitschy Shops, All the Noodles + Photogenic Sweets”*
7x7
July 28, 2023
<https://www.7x7.com/japantown-san-francisco-things-to-do-1787127496.html>
- *“Punk rock icon Patti Smith loves this SF Japantown restaurant with 23 kinds of spaghetti”*
San Francisco Chronicle
January 24, 2019:
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/living/article/On-the-Bridge-Japantown-Patti-Smith-San-Francisco-13558089.php>
- *“Patti Smith Is Obsessed With a Quirky Restaurant in Japantown”*
Eater San Francisco
January 23, 2019
<https://sf.eater.com/2019/1/23/18193157/patti-smith-sf-japantown-restaurant-on-the-bridge>
- *“At Japantown Legacy Businesses Benkyodo and On the Bridge, Resilience is on the Menu”*
KQED
May 5, 2021
<https://www.kqed.org/arts/13896729/benkyodo-mochi-on-the-bridge-sf-japantown-covid>

e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?

On The Bridge Restaurant received a Japanese Food Supporter Certificate, which is only given to businesses that promote supporting businesses that support Japanese goods. This certificate is given out in partnership with the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), which is a non-profit organization that connects businesses with the resources they need to successfully expand to Japan. This award is also made in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF).

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

If On The Bridge Restaurant were to close, there would be one less establishment that is operated by a Japanese papa and Salvadorian mama in San Francisco and the Bay Area. It is important to celebrate Japanese culture and honor the culture by appreciating Japanese restaurants that are still operated by Japanese chefs, such as On The Bridge Restaurant. This restaurant is also one of the only places you can experience a manga kissaten style and feel like you are in Japan with our ambience, homemade meals, with warm San Francisco vibes. Manga kissaten are establishments where visitors can read from an extensive library of manga (Japanese comics). On The Bridge Restaurant is harmoniously located on a bridge connecting

two essential malls, which hold a variety of Japanese-themed shops while being a bridge to Japanese culture where people can watch anime, read manga, learn about the various beers and sake from Japan, and eat yōshoku-style cuisine.

CRITERION 3: The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business

a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?

On The Bridge Restaurant is located inside the Japantown Kinokuniya building, which was established in 1968 as part of the controversial Western Addition redevelopment project that evicted over 8,000 residents. It is believed that the first wave of Japanese immigrants arrived in the 1880s, which is when Japantown became one of the first and largest Japantowns in the United States.

b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.

On The Bridge Restaurant is committed to serving yōshoku-style Japanese cuisine and proudly providing a variety of Japanese beers and sake.

c. What is the plan to keep the business open in the long term beyond the current ownership?

Although the future is still undecided, Mitsuhiro and Yolanda Nakamura are leaning towards maintaining the legacy once they retire by keeping the business within the family or selling the business to owners who would keep the restaurant going.

d. What challenges is the business facing today?

On The Bridge Restaurant has faced numerous challenges since it was established in 1992. There has been discrimination with Asian hate crimes in the Western Addition. The COVID-19 pandemic caused regulations that changed weekly. Inflation has been a problem. Increasing credit card fees and delivery application fees have been challenging. And there has been a constant struggle of trying to keep the On The Bridge experience affordable and comfortable for customers and staff.

Legacy Business Program staff will add the following details:

a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.

Restaurant featuring Japanese cuisine.

b. 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 Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building that houses On The Bridge Restaurant is "B - Unknown / Age Eligible."







BOSHIKUS-STYLE	
CURRY RICE or CURRY PASTA Dinner 12-12 P	\$12.99
MAKINOHASHI LIGHT PASTA Dinner 12-12 P	\$12.99
JAPANESE PASTA Dinner 12-12 P	\$12.99
EUROPEAN PASTA Dinner 12-12 P	\$12.99

"On The Bridge" - Creative Appetizers	
Shrimp Tempura	\$12.99
Shrimp Fried Rice	\$12.99
Shrimp Fried Noodle	\$12.99
Shrimp Fried Pasta	\$12.99
Shrimp Fried Curry	\$12.99
Shrimp Fried Curry	\$12.99
Shrimp Fried Curry	\$12.99
Shrimp Fried Curry	\$12.99

WE WILL BE CLOSED
ON THANKSGIVING DAY
"OPEN"
XMAS
New Year's Day

PHOTO BY FAYE LIU

On the Bridge

sfonthebridge.com

ONBURI

Interior view of the restaurant showing a bar area with bottles, a television screen, and a person behind the counter. A large floral arrangement is visible in the foreground.











WARE OF
ACK CHEF





BAR

BAR



SUNTORY "SHOCHU"

*Infusion
Cocktails*



WA
Drin
Spirits
Win
Alcohol
Ma
Cand
Duris



"Comary to popu
Tempu and Terroir
"YOROKU" was a
French and Italian chef
to eat their own party
variety is where fun is



BEWARE OF
ATTACK CHEF

水
MIO
SPARKLING WATER

一刻者

第位
白

Ashes of
Problem
Comer

長

Sho



BAR
open

PIZZA

LE
RE ON
ERA

ese ASAHI Draft Beer
The Difference!
SAHI SUPER DRY
Only Draft Beer Brewed in Japan!

On the Bridge Staff
are Fully Vaccinated!

TO PROTECT OUR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS
Vaccination & Masks
Required Indoors
Proof of Vaccination is required
to enter.
Please be ready to show your vaccination card and ID.
On the Bridge Restaurant







<https://www.sfchronicle.com/living/article/On-the-Bridge-Japantown-Patti-Smith-San-Francisco-13558089.php>

San Francisco Chronicle

Punk rock icon Patti Smith loves this SF Japantown restaurant with 23 kinds of spaghetti

[Amy Graff](#), SFGATE

Jan. 24, 2019



 **thisispattismith** • Follow
Japantown, San Francisco

thisispattismith This is one last meal at The Bridge with Lenny. I just love this place. Twenty-three kinds of Japanese pasta. I like the flying fish roe spaghetti and watching continuous videos of old episodes of Dragon Ball Z and taking sips of Lenny's wasabi beer. Tonight we did two special performances at the San Francisco Institute of Art in front of the Diego Rivera mural. Goodnight Diego, goodnight Japantown, goodnight everybody! Life is good...

Load more comments

cynthiaaugustimages @kim4peace



41,724 likes

6 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...

Punk rock icon Patti Smith shared a post on Instagram while eating at On the Bridge, a restaurant in S.F.'s Japantown, serving yoshoku cuisine, Western-influenced dishes that incorporate Japanese flavors. Instagram: @thisispattiesmith

Who knew?

There's a restaurant in San Francisco's Japantown serving 23 different types of spaghetti including one topped with pink cod roe dressing, squid and seaweed amid anime decor.

On the Bridge, aptly named because of its location on the bridge at the Japantown mall, is a favorite spot of 1970s punk rock icon Patti Smith.

Smith, whose most widely known song is "Because the Night," recently ate at the eatery with Lenny Kaye and shared a message and photo on Instagram.

"I like the flying fish roe spaghetti and watching continuous videos of old episodes of Dragon Ball Z and taking sips of Lenny's wasabi beer," she wrote.

The author, poet and musician was in town for two special performances at the San Francisco Art Institute in front of the Diego Rivera mural, Smith noted on Instagram. She also showed an exhibition of her photographs featuring her connection with the artist community on her travels to Mexico.

"Goodnight Diego, goodnight Japantown, goodnight everybody! Life is good..," she ended her message.

Click through the gallery above to read about more celebrity visits and sightings around San Francisco.



Written By
[Amy Graff](#)

Amy Graff is the news editor for SFGATE. She was born and raised in the Bay Area and got her start in news at the Daily Californian newspaper at UC Berkeley where she majored in English literature. She has been with SFGATE for more than 10 years. You can email her at agraff@sfgate.com.



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2024

Filing Date: January 24, 2024
Case No.: 2024-000782LBR
Business Name: On The Bridge Restaurant
Business Address: 1581 Webster Street, #206
Zoning: NCD (JAPANTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) Zoning District
 50-X Height and Bulk District
Cultural District: Japantown Cultural District
Block/Lot: 0701/007
Applicant: Emi Bertha Nakamura
 1581 Webster Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Dean Preston
Located In: District 5
Staff Contact: Elena Moore – 628.652.7322
 Elena.Moore@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

On The Bridge Restaurant is an iconic Japanese restaurant located in Japantown. Opened in 1992, the restaurant was one of the first in San Francisco to specialize in yōshoku-style food, a fusion of Japanese and European cuisines. Today, they are best known for their Shinjuku-style chicken stock curry, beef stock curry, and yōshoku-style “wafu” pastas, along with their offerings of Japanese beer and sake.

On The Bridge Restaurant was opened in 1992 by spouses Mitsuhiro Nakamura and Yolanda Nakamura. Mitsuhiro is Japanese and Yolanda is Salvadorian. The two still own and operate the business today, along with help from their three daughters.

On The Bridge Restaurant attracts a diverse clientele of both locals and tourists; many customers share an appreciation for and curiosity about Japanese culture. This makes the restaurant a place for learning, embracing, and celebrating. According to the owners, “On The Bridge Restaurant is harmoniously located on a bridge

connecting two essential malls, which hold a variety of Japanese-themed shops while being a bridge to Japanese culture where people can watch anime, read manga, learn about the various beers and sake from Japan, and eat yōshoku-style cuisine.” It is a true cultural connector in San Francisco.

The business’s primary location at 1581 Webster Street, #206 is a Category B (Unknown/Age Eligible) structure on the southwest corner of Post and Webster Streets in the Japantown neighborhood. It is within the Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) Zoning District and a 50-X Height and Bulk District. It is within the boundaries of the Japantown Cultural District, the Japantown Community Benefit District, the Japantown Special Use District, the Family Housing Opportunity Special Use District, and the Priority Equity Geographies Special Use District, as well as located within ¼ mile of an existing fringe financial service. It is located within the Japantown Planning Area, the former Western Addition A-2 Redevelopment Area (expired in 2009), and the Japantown Mayor’s Invest in Neighborhoods Initiative area.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. When was business founded?

The business was founded in 1992.

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

Yes. On The Bridge Restaurant qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. On The Bridge Restaurant has operated continuously in San Francisco for 32 years.
- b. On The Bridge Restaurant has contributed to the history and identity of the Japantown and Western Addition neighborhoods and San Francisco.
- c. On The Bridge Restaurant 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 business is associated with Japanese cuisine, specifically Shinjuku-style chicken stock curry, beef stock curry, and yōshoku-style “wafu” pastas.

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

Yes. On The Bridge is located on the iconic Webster Street bridge in the Kinokuniya building in the heart of Japantown. Although it is a Category B (Unknown/Age Eligible) building, the building has important historical associations with the controversial redevelopment of the Western Addition as well as the presence of Japanese culture in San Francisco.

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

Not as of the date of this Executive Summary. In 2015, the unadopted Neighborhood Commercial Corridors Survey rated the building as “Does not appear significant under Criterion C/3 (Architecture/Design).” The building is within the boundaries of the ongoing San Francisco Citywide Cultural Resources Survey.

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

While the business itself is not mentioned in a historic context statement, the Japantown Historic Context Statement mentions the Redevelopment-era construction of the Japantown malls.

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

Yes. On The Bridge Restaurant has been mentioned in the media numerous times, including articles in *7x7*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Eater San Francisco*, and *KQED*.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

On July 15th, 2020 the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted [Resolution No. 1127](#) centering Preservation Planning on racial and social equity. Understanding the benefits, burdens, and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed Preservation Planning documents provide is part of the Department’s Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor’s Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which required all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The Legacy Business Program is deeply intertwined with these goals. One of the primary purposes of the Legacy Business Program is to maintain San Francisco’s cultural fabric and to foster civic engagement and pride by assisting long-operating businesses remain in the city. The Legacy Business Registry was established to recognize longstanding, community-serving businesses that are valuable cultural assets of the city. These businesses, ranging from restaurants to art galleries to tire shops to community shelters, are key to sustaining the racial and social diversity in San Francisco and adding to the identity and character of our city and the many communities within it.

On The Bridge Restaurant is a family-owned business run by Japanese and Salvadorian owners. It is an important part of Japantown’s cultural heritage, and it is especially important as one of the first restaurants in San Francisco to specialize in yōshoku-style dishes, such as curries, cutlets, and Japanese-style hamburgers.

On The Bridge Restaurant gives back to its community by donating gift cards to the Japanese Bilingual Bicultural Program’s annual auction and by donating meals to the San Francisco Police Department in 2020.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 1581 Webster Street, #206 (1992-present)

Recommended by Applicant

- Yōshoku-style Japanese cuisine

- Offerings of Japanese beer and sake
- Anime film and television show collection for patrons to enjoy

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
 - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
 - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
 - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 1381

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2024

Case No.: 2024-00782LBR
Business Name: On The Bridge Restaurant
Business Address: 1581 Webster Street, #206
Zoning: NCD (JAPANTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) Zoning District
 50-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0701/007
Applicant: Emi Bertha Nakamura
 1581 Webster Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Dean Preston
Located In: District 5
Staff Contact: Elena Moore – 628.652.7322
Elena.Moore@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR ON THE BRIDGE RESTAURANT CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1581 WEBSTER ST, BLOCK/LOT 0701/007.

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 February 21, 2024, 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 On The Bridge Restaurant 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 On The Bridge Restaurant.

Location(s):

Current Locations:

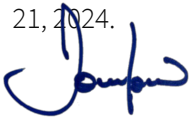
- 1581 Webster Street, #206 (1992-present)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Yōshoku-style Japanese cuisine
- Offerings of Japanese beer and sake
- Anime film and television show collection for patrons to enjoy

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 to the Office of Small Business on February 21, 2024.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Vergara, Wright, Foley, Nageswaran

NOES: None

ABSENT: Baldauf, Campbell

RECUSED: Matsuda

ADOPTED: February 21, 2024