



CEQA Exemption Determination

PROPERTY INFORMATION/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Address		Block/Lot(s)
REC & PARK: JAPANTOWN PEACE PLAZA - 1610 GEARY BLVD.		0700022, 0700035, 0700037
Case No.		Permit No.
2019-000895ENV		
<input type="checkbox"/> Addition/ Alteration	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition (requires HRE for Category B Building)	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
<p>Project description for Planning Department approval.</p> <p>Renovation will fully remedy the leaking water to an MTA- owned garage below. The renovation will fully remedy this issue and provide a re-invigorated public space for the community. The renovation will include waterproofing, new planting, shade structures, paving, seating, lighting, and potential structural reinforcement of the plaza and/or Peace pagoda (if deemed necessary). The new design seeks to provide the community with more functional access to the plaza, both for everyday and special event use, while harnessing the symbolism that the plaza holds within the neighborhood, city and region. Modified Project Description #1: To address seismic safety concerns following a structural analysis, a seismic retrofit is proposed for the Japantown Peace Pagoda. The seismic reinforcement recommendations include: A. Four (0.5") steel reinforced tendons/cables that run externally along the long side of each column from the foundation (i.e., garage ceiling) to the roof, installed outside the carbon fiber wrapping. B. To reinforce the roof's seismic stability at every level, stainless steel plate reinforcement will be added to the connecting joints between existing adjoining concrete roof panels. Copper standing seam roof (over the existing concrete roof panels) will be removed and replaced to match original material in its</p> <p>FULL PROJECT DESCRIPTION ATTACHED</p>		

STEP 1: EXEMPTION TYPE

The project has been determined to be exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 1 - Existing Facilities. Interior and exterior alterations; additions under 10,000 sq. ft.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 3 - New Construction. Up to three new single-family residences or six dwelling units in one building; commercial/office structures; utility extensions; change of use under 10,000 sq. ft. if principally permitted or with a CU.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Class 32 - In-Fill Development. New Construction of seven or more units or additions greater than 10,000 sq. ft. and meets the conditions described below:</p> <p>(a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.</p> <p>(b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than 5 acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.</p> <p>(c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered rare or threatened species.</p> <p>(d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.</p> <p>(e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.</p> <p>FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING USE ONLY</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Common Sense Exemption (CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3)). It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility of a significant effect on the environment . FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING USE ONLY

STEP 2: ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING ASSESSMENT

TO BE COMPLETED BY PROJECT PLANNER

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Air Quality: Would the project add new sensitive receptors (specifically, schools, day care facilities, hospitals, residential dwellings, and senior-care facilities within an Air Pollution Exposure Zone? Does the project have the potential to emit substantial pollutant concentrations (e.g. use of diesel construction equipment, backup diesel generators, heavy industry, diesel trucks, etc.)? (refer to <i>The Environmental Information tab on the https://sfplanninggis.org/pim/</i>)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Hazardous Materials: If the project site is located on the Maher map or is suspected of containing hazardous materials (based on a previous use such as gas station, auto repair, dry cleaners, or heavy manufacturing, or a site with underground storage tanks): Would the project involve 50 cubic yards or more of soil disturbance - or a change of use from industrial to residential?</p> <p>Note that a categorical exemption shall not be issued for a project located on the Cortese List if box is checked, note below whether the applicant has enrolled in or received a waiver from the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) Maher program, or if Environmental Planning staff has determined that hazardous material effects would be less than significant. (refer to <i>The Environmental Information tab on the https://sfplanninggis.org/pim/</i>)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Transportation: Does the project involve a child care facility or school with 30 or more students, or a location 1,500 sq. ft. or greater? Does the project have the potential to adversely affect transit, pedestrian and/or bicycle safety (hazards) or the adequacy of nearby transit, pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Archeological Resources: Would the project result in soil disturbance/modification greater than two (2) feet below grade in an archeological sensitive area or eight (8) feet in a non-archeological sensitive area? If yes, archeology review is required.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Subdivision/Lot Line Adjustment: Does the project site involve a subdivision or lot line adjustment on a lot with a slope average of 20% or more? (refer to <i>The Environmental Information tab on the https://sfplanninggis.org/pim/</i>) If box is checked, Environmental Planning must issue the exemption.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Average Slope of Parcel = or > 25%, or site is in Edgehill Slope Protection Area or Northwest Mt. Sutro Slope Protection Area: Does the project involve any of the following: (1) New building construction, except one-story storage or utility occupancy, (2) horizontal additions, if the footprint area increases more than 50%, or (3) horizontal and vertical additions increase more than 500 square feet of new projected roof area? (refer to <i>The Environmental Planning tab on the https://sfplanninggis.org/pim/</i>) If box is checked, a geotechnical report is likely required and Environmental Planning must issue the exemption.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Seismic Hazard: <input type="checkbox"/> Landslide or <input type="checkbox"/> Liquefaction Hazard Zone:</p> <p>Does the project involve any of the following: (1) New building construction, except one-story storage or utility occupancy, (2) horizontal additions, if the footprint area increases more than 50%, (3) horizontal and vertical additions increase more than 500 square feet of new projected roof area, or (4) grading performed at a site in the landslide hazard zone? (refer to <i>The Environmental tab on the https://sfplanninggis.org/pim/</i>) If box is checked, a geotechnical report is required and Environmental Planning must issue the exemption.</p>
<p>Comments and Planner Signature (optional): Laura Lynch</p>	

**STEP 3: PROPERTY STATUS - HISTORIC RESOURCE
TO BE COMPLETED BY PROJECT PLANNER**

PROPERTY IS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING: <i>(refer to Property Information Map)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Category A: Known Historical Resource. GO TO STEP 5.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Category B: Potential Historical Resource (over 45 years of age). GO TO STEP 4.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Category C: Not a Historical Resource or Not Age Eligible (under 45 years of age). GO TO STEP 6.

**STEP 4: PROPOSED WORK CHECKLIST
TO BE COMPLETED BY PROJECT PLANNER**

Check all that apply to the project.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Change of use and new construction. Tenant improvements not included.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Regular maintenance or repair to correct or repair deterioration, decay, or damage to building.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Window replacement that meets the Department's <i>Window Replacement Standards</i> . Does not include storefront window alterations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Garage work. A new opening that meets the <i>Guidelines for Adding Garages and Curb Cuts</i> , and/or replacement of a garage door in an existing opening that meets the Residential Design Guidelines.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Deck, terrace construction, or fences not visible from any immediately adjacent public right-of-way.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Mechanical equipment installation that is not visible from any immediately adjacent public right-of-way.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Dormer installation that meets the requirements for exemption from public notification under <i>Zoning Administrator Bulletin No. 3: Dormer Windows</i> .
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Addition(s) that are not visible from any immediately adjacent public right-of-way for 150 feet in each direction; does not extend vertically beyond the floor level of the top story of the structure or is only a single story in height; does not have a footprint that is more than 50% larger than that of the original building; and does not cause the removal of architectural significant roofing features.
Note: Project Planner must check box below before proceeding.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Project is not listed. GO TO STEP 5.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project does not conform to the scopes of work. GO TO STEP 5.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project involves four or more work descriptions. GO TO STEP 5.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project involves less than four work descriptions. GO TO STEP 6.

**STEP 5: ADVANCED HISTORICAL REVIEW
TO BE COMPLETED BY PRESERVATION PLANNER**

Check all that apply to the project.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>1. Reclassification of property status. <i>(Attach HRER Part I)</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reclassify to Category A a. Per HRER</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reclassify to Category C <i>(No further historic review)</i></p> <p>b. Other <i>(specify):</i> Property listed on the Landmark Designation Work Program and considered an eligible historic property for the purposes of CEQA. (See Part II dated 4/29/19)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Project involves a known historical resource (CEQA Category A) as determined by Step 3 and conforms entirely to proposed work checklist in Step 4.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Interior alterations to publicly accessible spaces that do not remove, alter, or obscure character defining features.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Window replacement of original/historic windows that are not "in-kind" but are consistent with existing historic character.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Façade/storefront alterations that do not remove, alter, or obscure character-defining features.

<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Raising the building in a manner that does not remove, alter, or obscure character-defining features.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Restoration based upon documented evidence of a building's historic condition, such as historic photographs, plans, physical evidence, or similar buildings.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8. Work consistent with the <i>Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Analysis required)</i> : Rehabilitation of Peace Plaza conforms to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. See Part II PTR form for more information. (dated 4/29/19)
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Work compatible with a historic district (Analysis required):
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Work that would not materially impair a historic resource (Attach HRER Part II).
Note: If ANY box in STEP 5 above is checked, a Preservation Planner MUST sign below.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Project can proceed with exemption review. The project has been reviewed by the Preservation Planner and can proceed with exemption review. GO TO STEP 6.
Comments (optional):	
Preservation Planner Signature: Michelle A Taylor	

STEP 6: EXEMPTION DETERMINATION
TO BE COMPLETED BY PROJECT PLANNER

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No further environmental review is required. The project is exempt under CEQA. There are no unusual circumstances that would result in a reasonable possibility of a significant effect.	
	Project Approval Action: Rec Park Commission	Signature: Laura Lynch
		04/29/2019
	<p>Supporting documents are available for review on the San Francisco Property Information Map, which can be accessed at https://sfplanninggis.org/pim/. Individual files can be viewed by clicking on the Planning Applications link, clicking the "More Details" link under the project's environmental record number (ENV) and then clicking on the "Related Documents" link.</p> <p>Once signed and dated, this document constitutes an exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines and Chapter 31 of the SF Admin Code. Per Chapter 31, an appeal of an exemption determination to the Board of Supervisors shall be filed within 30 days after the Approval Action occurs at a noticed public hearing, or within 30 days after posting on the Planning Department's website a written decision or written notice of the Approval Action, if the approval is not made at a noticed public hearing.</p>	

Full Project Description

Renovation will fully remedy the leaking water to an MTA- owned garage below. The renovation will fully remedy this issue and provide a re-invigorated public space for the community. The renovation will include waterproofing, new planting, shade structures, paving, seating, lighting, and potential structural reinforcement of the plaza and/or Peace pagoda (if deemed necessary). The new design seeks to provide the community with more functional access to the plaza, both for everyday and special event use, while harnessing the symbolism that the plaza holds within the neighborhood, city and region.

Modified Project Description #1: To address seismic safety concerns following a structural analysis, a seismic retrofit is proposed for the Japantown Peace Pagoda. The seismic reinforcement recommendations include:

- A. Four (0.5") steel reinforced tendons/cables that run externally along the long side of each column from the foundation (i.e., garage ceiling) to the roof, installed outside the carbon fiber wrapping.
- B. To reinforce the roof's seismic stability at every level, stainless steel plate reinforcement will be added to the connecting joints between existing adjoining concrete roof panels. Copper standing seam roof (over the existing concrete roof panels) will be removed and replaced to match original material in its entirety.
- C. Increased massing/depth on the horizontal roof ringbeams where they are connected to the columns at each roof level, this includes a new deep circular ring beam at the top roof.
- D. Carbon fiber wrapping around each column, roughly 1" thick. The carbon fiber wrapping would run to the 3rd story roof.
- E. Five Fiber Reinforced Polymer (FRP) strips would run along each column until the 3rd story roof. Three FRP strips would run along the interior side of the column, two would run along the outer edge of each column. The strips would be anchored into the existing podium via three 36" deep pockets. The FRP strips would be located under the carbon fiber wrapping.

Most of these improvements would not be visible to pedestrians looking at the Pagoda, except for the column reinforcement tendons and carbon fiber wrapping. Note, the wrapping will have a texture similar to concrete and all reinforcement materials will be painted the existing color of the Pagoda. When standing within the Pagoda looking upwards, the increased mass, external tendons, and carbon wrap would be visible. The reinforcement of the existing roof connections would only be visible from above. The new deep circular ring beam would not be visible. The project also includes a new mural on the Geary Boulevard garage walls (currently painted concrete).

Modified Project Description #2: The project would remove 58 trees, three trees will be moved and replanted on site, and a total of 16 new trees will be planted. The Pagoda podium and Plaza will be modified to accommodate ADA requirements as well as electrical updates and seismic retrofitting. The height of the Plaza itself will be raised to align with Post Street to the north. Raising the height of the Plaza will require altering the existing concrete podium steps at the Peace Pagoda. The podium consists of five steps, which are labeled as Steps 1 through 5 on project drawings. Step 1 will be raised to align with the new level of the Plaza, and will be eliminated, leaving the revised podium with four steps instead of five. The remaining four steps will be modified in height to accommodate codes for publicly accessible steps and electrical housings currently located within the podium that require updating. New steps will be cast concrete and will match the existing steps in terms of profile and overall appearance. Detail descriptions of the method for chipping out and replacing cast concrete steps may be found in project drawings. The net result will be a four-step podium to replace the existing five-step podium.

STEP 7: MODIFICATION OF A CEQA EXEMPT PROJECT

TO BE COMPLETED BY PROJECT PLANNER

In accordance with Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code, when a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exempt project changes after the Approval Action and requires a subsequent approval, the Environmental Review Officer (or his or her designee) must determine whether the proposed change constitutes a substantial modification of that project. This checklist shall be used to determine whether the proposed changes to the approved project would constitute a "substantial modification" and, therefore, be subject to additional environmental review pursuant to CEQA.

MODIFIED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Modified Project Description:

Please see page 5 for the modified project description #2.

The presence of a podium is a character-defining feature of the Peace Pagoda. Loss of one step to accommodate essential ADA and life safety upgrades would not have an adverse impact on the historic resource.

The project will comply with RPD standard construction measure #3, biological resources, including the requirement to conduct bird and bats surveys by a qualified biologist if tree removal is conducted during the following periods of February 15 through August 31 (bird nesting season), or April 16 through August 30, or October 16 through Feb 28 (bat roosting seasons).

DETERMINATION IF PROJECT CONSTITUTES SUBSTANTIAL MODIFICATION

Compared to the approved project, would the modified project:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Result in expansion of the building envelope, as defined in the Planning Code;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Result in the change of use that would require public notice under Planning Code Sections 311 or 312;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Result in demolition as defined under Planning Code Section 317 or 19005(f)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is any information being presented that was not known and could not have been known at the time of the original determination, that shows the originally approved project may no longer qualify for the exemption?

If at least one of the above boxes is checked, further environmental review is required

DETERMINATION OF NO SUBSTANTIAL MODIFICATION

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The proposed modification would not result in any of the above changes.
If this box is checked, the proposed modifications are exempt under CEQA, in accordance with prior project approval and no additional environmental review is required. This determination shall be posted on the Planning Department website and office and mailed to the applicant, City approving entities, and anyone requesting written notice. In accordance with Chapter 31, Sec 31.08j of the San Francisco Administrative Code, an appeal of this determination can be filed to the Environmental Review Officer within 10 days of posting of this determination.	
Planner Name:	Date:
Don Lewis	07/03/2023