

**Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development**  
City and County of San Francisco



**London N. Breed**  
Mayor

**Eric D. Shaw**  
Director

August 24, 2023

*You are receiving this letter because you demonstrated interest in receiving electronic notices from the City and County of San Francisco.*

**Japantown Peace Plaza Renovation and Pagoda Seismic Retrofitting Project**

Dear Neighbor:

The San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department is proposing the Japantown Peace Plaza Renovation and Pagoda Seismic Retrofitting Project located at **1610 Geary Boulevard, San Francisco, CA 94115**. In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended; and Title 24 Part 58 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as amended; the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) is conducting environmental review that will analyze the effects of the proposed project on historic architectural and archeological resources; among other factors of the environment. Funding for the project may include funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). MOHCD is the responsible entity for complying with NEPA and additional federal regulations, including the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

As shown in **Figure 1**, on the following page, the proposed project site 1610 Geary Boulevard is within the block bounded by Post Street to the north, Laguna Street to the east, Geary Boulevard to the south, and Webster Street to the west, in Japantown in the City's Western Addition neighborhood. The site currently encompasses the Peace Plaza, a public open space that occupies the Buchanan Street alignment between Geary Boulevard and Post Street. The plaza contains the Peace Pagoda, a circular-plan reinforced concrete structure that is a Modernist interpretation of a traditional Japanese pagoda form, which was designed by Japanese architect Yoshiro Taniguchi. The Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda were completed in 1968 as part of a transnational project involving the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, working in collaboration with developer National-Braemer and Japan-based investor Kinetsu Enterprises Company. The Peace Plaza's landscape design was originally Modernist in character but was renovated during the early 2000s.



**Figure 1. Project Site Location**

The proposed project, with HUD funding assistance requiring approval of Part 58, includes waterproofing, new planting, shade structures, paving, seating, lighting, and structural reinforcement of the plaza and Peace Pagoda. 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. The project would

be managed by the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department. The seismic retrofit of the Peace Pagoda will involve the following:

- Installation of 0.5” steel reinforced tendons along the columns of the structure;
- Addition of stainless-steel plate reinforcement to joints between concrete roof panels, and in-kind replacement of copper standing seam roof covering;
- Addition of concrete massing on the horizontal roof ring beams at each roof level, in a minimally visible location;
- Installation of carbon fiber wrapping around each column up to the third story roof, approximately 1” thick;
- Addition of Fiber Reinforced Polymer strips along each column until the third story roof, located under the carbon fiber wrapping; and
- Alterations to the podium of the pagoda, which would absorb the lowermost step and expand the second step while replacing the three upper steps in kind.

Section 106 of the NHPA (36 CFR Part 800) requires that federal agencies and their delegated representatives assess the potential effects of projects on historic properties listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (“National Register”). To assess effects, the Area of Potential Effects (APE) was defined, which represents the geographic area where it is possible that the project could result in effects on historic properties. The APE defined for the project is the boundary of the Peace Plaza, corresponding to the physical extent of work proposed by the project. This APE is shown in **Figure 2**. Because the Peace Plaza is located on the roof of a parking garage, the plaza renovation will not require any ground disturbance below the floor of the garage structure and would therefore not disturb any archaeological resources.



**Figure 2. Area of Potential Effects**

The San Francisco Planning Department has evaluated existing property, structure, and object located within the APE for their eligibility for listing in the National Register. The Peace Plaza was evaluated as a whole, and the Peace Pagoda was evaluated individually. As a result of this evaluation, the San Francisco Planning Department concluded that the Peace Plaza and the Pagoda are both eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A (Events), for their close association with bi-national redevelopment efforts in Japantown during the 1960s. The plaza and pagoda structure are also eligible for National Register listing under Criterion C (Architecture/Design). The Peace Pagoda has distinct Modernist design and construction qualities, which make it a monumental and wholly unique landmark in Japantown that expresses a modern vision of the neighborhood's rich cultural identity. Although the Peace Plaza has been altered, its open space creates the immediate setting for the pagoda. The properties' period of significance is 1968, the year they were constructed.

The San Francisco Planning Department assessed the project's potential effects on the Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda and found that the project complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, a set of treatment standards for historic properties developed by the National Park Service. The project would not alter, directly or indirectly, any of the characteristics of the Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda that qualify the property for inclusion in the National Register in a manner that would diminish their historical integrity. The project scope would have no adverse effect on historic properties, the subject Peace Plaza and Pagoda.

It is the purpose of this letter to invite you to participate in the consultation process for this project. We would like this consultation to address the cultural and historic property issues involving this project pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA (36 CFR Part 800). We are inviting your comments on this project and its effects on historic properties pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4, as well as any other information that you may have on the evaluated proposed project.

Your response to this letter is greatly appreciated. Please provide a response by **Tuesday, September 26, 2023**, so that we may discuss this undertaking and any of those identified areas of interest. Should you have any questions about this project, you may contact me at the Mayor's Office of Housing, City and County of San Francisco, 1 South Van Ness Avenue, 5th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103, or via email at [Lorena.Guadiana@sfgov.org](mailto:Lorena.Guadiana@sfgov.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lorena Guadiana', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Lorena Guadiana  
MOHCD Acting Compliance Coordinator