

FILED  
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
OAKLAND  
2010 APR -1 PM 1:12

# CITY OF OAKLAND

## AGENDA REPORT

TO: Office of the City Administrator  
ATTN: Dan Lindheim  
FROM: Community and Economic Development Agency  
DATE: April 13, 2010

RE: **An Ordinance Designating the Buddhist Church of Oakland At 825 Jackson Street As A Landmark Pursuant To Section 17.136.070 Of The Oakland Planning Code.**

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### SUMMARY

The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the City Planning Commission recommend designating the Buddhist Church of Oakland, located at 825 Jackson Street, as a City of Oakland landmark.

The landmark nomination was submitted by the property owner, the Building Committee of the Buddhist Church of Oakland. The Landmarks Board unanimously recommended designation on December 14, 2009, as did the Planning Commission on January 20, 2010. The staff report to the Planning Commission is included as *Attachment A*. There is no known opposition to the landmark designation.

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached ordinance designating the Buddhist Church of Oakland as a City of Oakland landmark.

### FISCAL IMPACT

The landmark designation of the Buddhist Church of Oakland does not require any additional budget allocation. No additional staffing is required.

### BACKGROUND

The Buddhist Church of Oakland is currently a Potential Designated Historic Property (PDHP) with an Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey rating of A3 ("A" - highest importance, "3" - not in a historic district). It is part of the City of Oakland's Local Register of Historic Resources and is therefore among the city's most important PDHPs. It is also included on the Preservation Study List.

A recent photograph of the building is included as *Attachment B*.

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## KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

**Historical and Architectural Significance.** The Buddhist Church of Oakland is eligible for landmark designation in that it:

- is an early local example of traditional Japanese temple architecture, featuring a roof with curved tiles, deeply overhanging eaves with a double set of projecting rafters, and carved wood stylized dragon's heads modeled after those from a Shinto shrine in Osaka, Japan; wood railings and stone lanterns leading to a wood-columned portico with carved decorative elements; and Japanese style landscaping, including bonsai pines and a Bodhi tree;
- is believed to be the first building designed by Gentoku Shimamoto, a prominent Japanese-American architect who designed other traditional Japanese style buildings in San Jose, San Francisco, New York and New Jersey;
- was used as a safe place to store the personal belongings of church members who were interned at the Japanese internment camp in Topaz, Utah during World War II, and was later used by many church members returning from the internment as a hostel until they could find regular places to live and work;
- was moved from its original location at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Jackson Street in 1950 due to the construction of the Nimitz Freeway;
- has served as the focal point for Japanese-American Buddhist culture in Oakland for over 80 years; and
- continues to serve as a vital cultural center for Oakland's Japanese-American community by hosting various community events, sponsoring a Japanese language school, providing classes in Japanese cultural arts, sponsoring youth basketball teams, and providing many other programs and forms of support for church members.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### **Regulatory Effect of Landmark Designation**

Regulations and benefits for a Landmark property include design review of exterior changes, exemption from design review fees, up to 240 days delay of demolition, and a duty to keep in good repair. Landmarks are treated as historic resources for purposes of CEQA review and are eligible to use the State Historical Building Code. Although the historical and architectural

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significance lists interior features, the City of Oakland preservation regulations, and the attached Ordinance, apply only to the property's exterior features.

Significant exterior changes to landmarks are referred to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board for recommendations (Section 17.136.060) before a decision on the design review application is made by the Director of Planning or the Planning Commission. Minor exterior changes can be processed administratively by the Director of Planning, who may seek input from the LPAB as needed. There are special design review findings for landmarks, including "that the proposal will not adversely affect the exterior features of the designated landmark..." and "that the proposal will not adversely affect the special character, interest, or value of the landmark and its site, as viewed both in themselves and in their setting..." unless preserving the landmark is architecturally or economically infeasible.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

***Economic:*** Landmark designation encourages maintenance and careful rehabilitation of buildings, which helps to stabilize and enhance property values and can also stimulate economic revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood. Building maintenance and rehabilitation also creates skilled employment opportunities.

***Environmental:*** Landmark designation encourages the maintenance and re-use of existing historic buildings and therein helps to conserve the materials and energy used to construct those buildings.

***Social Equity:*** Landmark designation encourages continued maintenance and restoration or rehabilitation of existing buildings. Therefore, it acts as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization and further enhances the community by creating community identity.

### **DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN ACCESS**

The church is currently accessible to seniors and persons with disabilities, with elevator access to each level of the building and restrooms that are in compliance with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Landmark designation does not prohibit future modifications that may be necessary for further ADA compliance and in fact can facilitate such modifications through use of the State Historical Building Code.

### **RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE**

Approve the proposed landmark designation of the Buddhist Church of Oakland. Landmark designation has the potential to be a catalyst for further revitalization of Oakland's distinct and

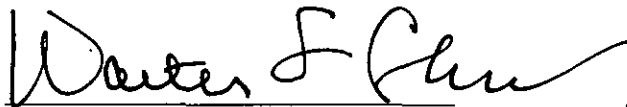
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diverse neighborhoods and its strong historical character. The requirements for maintenance and repair would promote physical and economic revitalization in the surrounding area, and the honorific designation would recognize and reinforce pride, identity, and a sense of community among Oakland's Japanese-American community as well as in the city as a whole.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached ordinance designating the Buddhist Church of Oakland as a City of Oakland Landmark.

Respectfully submitted,



Walter S. Cohen, Director  
Community and Economic Development Agency

Reviewed by:  
Eric Angstadt, Deputy Director  
Community and Economic Development Agency

Prepared by:  
Holly Pearson, Planner I  
Planning & Zoning Division

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE  
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:



Office of the City Administrator

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A) January 20, 2010 Planning Commission Staff Report, including landmark nomination form and eligibility rating sheet
- B) Photograph of the Buddhist Church of Oakland

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|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Location:</b>                    | <b>825 Jackson Street (APN: 001-0179-004-00)</b>  |
| <b>Proposal:</b>                    | Landmark Nomination of the Buddhist Church of Oakland   |
| <b>Applicant:</b>                   | Mark Shimamoto, c/o Buddhist Church of Oakland Building Committee   |
| <b>Owner:</b>                       | Buddhist Church of Oakland  |
| <b>Case File Number:</b>            | <b>LM09-240</b>   |
| <b>General Plan:</b>                | Central Business District   |
| <b>Zoning:</b>                      | CBD-R Central Business District Residential   |
| <b>Historic Status:</b>             | Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey Rating: A3 (Highest Importance, Not in a Historic District). Listed on the Preservation Study List.                                  |
| <b>Environmental Determination:</b> | Exempt, Section 15331 of the State CEQA Guidelines, Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation; Section 15183 Projects consistent with the General Plan or Zoning |
| <b>Service Delivery District:</b>   | Metro   |
| <b>City Council District:</b>       | 2 – Kernighan   |
| <b>For Further Information:</b>     | Contact <b>Holly Pearson</b> at (510) 238-3079 or <a href="mailto:hpearson@oaklandnet.com">hpearson@oaklandnet.com</a> .  |

## SUMMARY

A nomination for landmark designation of the Buddhist Church of Oakland has been submitted by the property owners and reviewed by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB). The LPAB reviewed and unanimously accepted the eligibility rating, and directed staff to prepare a draft resolution initiating landmark designation. That resolution was unanimously adopted at the LPAB meeting on December 14, 2009, and the LPAB directed staff to forward the nomination to the Planning Commission.

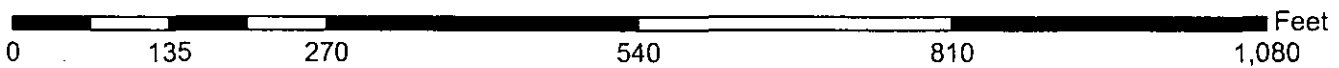
## BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Historical and Architectural Significance

The Resolution (see Attachment A) and Evaluation Sheet for Landmark Eligibility (see Attachment B) adopted by the Landmarks Board detail the cultural, historical and architectural significance of the Buddhist Church of Oakland. The building is an early local example of traditional Japanese temple architecture. It was designed by Gentoku Shimamoto and Oliver Thornton and constructed in 1927. Shimamoto was a prominent Japanese-American architect who designed other traditional Japanese style buildings in San Jose, San Francisco, New York and New Jersey.

The temple's significant architectural elements include a roof with curved tiles, deeply overhanging eaves with a double set of projecting rafters, and carved wood stylized dragon's heads modeled after those from a Shinto shrine in Osaka, Japan; wood railings and stone lanterns leading to a wood-columned portico with carved decorative elements; and Japanese style landscaping, including bonsai pines and a Bodhi tree.

# CITY OF OAKLAND PLANNING COMMISSION



Case File: LM09-240  
Applicant: Mark Shimamoto  
c/o Buddhist Church of Oakland Building Committee  
Address: 825 Jackson Street  
Zone: CBD-R

Furthermore, the temple has served as the focal point for Japanese-American Buddhist culture in Oakland for over 80 years, and continues to serve as a vital cultural center for Oakland's Japanese-American community. The church hosts various community events, sponsors a Japanese language school, provides classes in Japanese cultural arts, sponsors youth basketball teams, and offers many other programs services for its congregation members.

### **Landmarks Board Action**

The LPAB reviewed and unanimously accepted the "Evaluation Sheet for Landmark Eligibility" for the Buddhist Church of Oakland. The evaluation sheet gives a Contingency Rating (Preliminary Total) of 42 points and a Present Rating (Adjusted Total) of 34.65 points. These numbers correspond to an 'A' rating (a minimum of 35 points is required for an 'A' rating). 'A' and 'B' rated buildings are eligible for City Landmark designation.

The LPAB adopted Resolution 2009-1 in favor of the landmark nomination on December 14, 2009.

### **Effect of Landmark Designation**

Regulations and benefits for a Landmark property include design review of exterior changes, exemption from design review fees, up to 240 days delay of demolition, and a duty to keep in good repair. Landmarks are treated as historic resources for purposes of CEQA review and are eligible to use the State Historical Building Code.

Significant exterior changes to landmarks are referred to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board for recommendations (Section 17.136.060) before a decision on the design review application is made by the Director of Planning or the Planning Commission. Minor exterior changes can be processed administratively by the Director of Planning, who may seek input from the LPAB as needed. There are special design review findings for landmarks, in Zoning Code Section 17.136.070(D), including "that the proposal will not adversely affect the exterior features of the designated landmark..." and "that the proposal will not adversely affect the special character, interest, or value of the landmark and its site, as viewed both in themselves and in their setting..." unless preserving the landmark is architecturally or economically infeasible.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The proposed landmark designation is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15331 because it involves preservation of a historical resource in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

### **CONCLUSION**

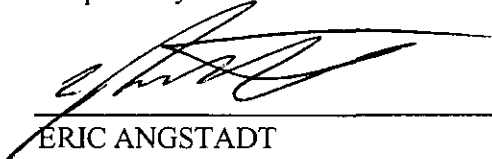
Staff and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board recommend landmark designation for the Buddhist Church of Oakland. The building clearly meets the Board's historical and architectural

eligibility criteria, and landmark status is sought in order to recognize and protect this important cultural and historical resource.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

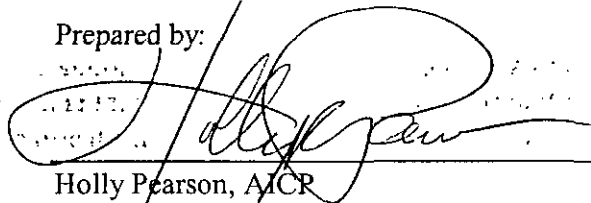
1. Affirm staff's environmental determination.
2. Recommend that City Council adopt an ordinance designating the Buddhist Church of Oakland as a City of Oakland Landmark.

Respectfully submitted:



ERIC ANGSTADT  
Deputy Director  
Community and Economic Development Agency

Prepared by:



Holly Pearson, AICP  
Planner I

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Resolution 2009-01, as amended and adopted by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board
- B. Eligibility Rating Sheet
- C. Landmark Nomination form and supporting materials



RESOLUTION 2009-1  
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
CITY OF OAKLAND

**Buddhist Church of Oakland**  
**825 Jackson Street**

WHEREAS, a proposal to designate the following property as an Oakland Landmark pursuant to Section 17.144 of the Oakland Planning Code has been considered by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed and examined the material pertaining to this property in Case File **LM09-240** and the Oakland Landmark Nomination Application form, a copy of which is attached; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that the property meets the landmark designation criteria found at Section 17.07.030P of the Planning Code and the Board's Guidelines for Determination of Landmark Eligibility in that the property:

- is an early local example of traditional Japanese temple architecture, featuring a roof with curved tiles, deeply overhanging eaves with a double set of projecting rafters, and carved wood stylized dragon's heads modeled after those from a Shinto shrine in Osaka, Japan; dragon wood railings and stone lanterns leading to a wood-columned portico with carved decorative elements; and Japanese style landscaping, including bonsai pines and a Bodhi tree;
- is believed to be the first building designed by Gentoku Shimamoto, a prominent Japanese-American architect who designed other traditional Japanese style buildings in San Jose, San Francisco, New York and New Jersey;
- was used as a safe place to store the personal belongings of church members who were interned at the Topaz, Utah Japanese internment camp during World War II, and was later used by many church members returning from the internment as a hostel until they could find regular places to live and work;
- was moved from its original location at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Jackson Street in 1950 due to the construction of the Nimitz Freeway;
- has served as the focal point for Japanese-American Buddhist culture in Oakland for over 80 years; and
- continues to serve as a vital cultural center for Oakland's Japanese-American community by hosting various community events, sponsoring a Japanese language school, providing classes in Japanese cultural arts, sponsoring youth basketball teams, and providing many other programs and forms of support for church members.

And WHEREAS, an Evaluation Sheet for Landmark Eligibility has been prepared for the property in accordance with the Board's Guidelines for Determination of Landmark Eligibility; and

WHEREAS, the Evaluation Sheet shows that the property meets the Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed and accepted the Evaluation Sheet, a copy of which is attached; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that this property merits Landmark designation, protective regulations, and preservation for the enjoyment of future generations;

Now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board hereby initiates, under Section 17.144.030C of the Oakland Planning Code, action to establish as a Landmark the following:

HISTORICAL NAME: Buddhist Church of Oakland

COMMON NAME: Buddhist Church of Oakland

ADDRESS: 825 Jackson Street

DATE BUILT: 1927. Moved 1950.

ARCHITECT: Gentoku Shimamoto, Oliver Thornton

ORIGINAL USE: Buddhist church / temple

PRESENT USE: Same

PARCEL NUMBER: 001-0179-004 00

And be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That this property shall be preserved generally in all its exterior features as existing on the date hereof or may be modified to restore, replicate, or more closely resemble its original or other historical appearance; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That this action be forwarded to the City Planning Commission for public hearing and consideration;

Approved by the Landmarks Preservation Board,  
Oakland, California: December 14, 2009

ATTEST: Jean Pauline, Secretary

City of Oakland -- Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board  
EVALUATION SHEET FOR LANDMARK ELIGIBILITY

Address 825 JACKSON ST.  
Name BUDDHIST CHURCH OF OAKLAND

A. ARCHITECTURE

- 1. Exterior/Design Roofs, porches, landscaping, Japanese details E VG G FP
- 2. Interior \_\_\_\_\_ E VG G FP
- 3. Construction wood frame, carved appliques/roof details E VG G FP
- 4. Designer/Builder W. Thornton, G. Wood, W. Shimamoto E VG G FP
- 5. Style/Type roof prominent, building body Japanese temple E VG G FP

B. HISTORY

- 6. Person/Organization (2nd half) Buddhist Church E VG G FP
- 7. Event Moved from SE corner of 6th & Jackson Sts. E VG G FP
- 8. Patterns churches, Japanese ethnic presence E VG G FP
- 9. Age 1927 E VG G FP
- 10. Site new site, original neighborhood E VG G FP

return original congregation

C. CONTEXT

- 11. Continuity \_\_\_\_\_ E VG G FP
- 12. Familiarity \_\_\_\_\_ E VG G FP

D. INTEGRITY

- 13. Condition \_\_\_\_\_ E VG G FP
- 14. Exterior Alterations \_\_\_\_\_ E VG G FP

Evaluated by Pavlinec/mavin Date 10/20/09

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| STATUS                     |  |
| Rating: _____              |  |
| City Landmark Eligibility: | <input type="checkbox"/> Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Not eligible                |
| National Register Status:  | <input type="checkbox"/> Listed <input type="checkbox"/> In process                    |
|                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Determined eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Appears eligible |
|                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Appears ineligible  |
| Site of Opportunity        | <input type="checkbox"/>   |

This evaluation sheet was accepted by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board at its meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ (Secretary)

City of Oakland -- Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board  
EVALUATION TALLY SHEET FOR LANDMARK ELIGIBILITY

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

|  |      |      |      |     |  |       |            |
|--|------|------|------|-----|--|-------|------------|
| 12   | 6    | 3    | 0    | N/A | 1. Exterior/Design   |       |            |
| 6  | 3    | 2    | 0    |     | 2. Interior  |       |            |
| 6  | 3    | 2    | 0    |     | 3. Construction  |       |            |
| 4  | 2    | 1    | 0    |     | 4. Designer/Builder  |       |            |
| 6  | 3    | 2    | 0    |     | 5. Style/Type  |       |            |
|  | 9    | 2    |      |     | A. ARCHITECTURE TOTAL  | 11    | (max. 26)  |
| 30   | 15   | 8    | 0    |     | 6. Person/Organization                                       |       |            |
| 30   | 15   | 8    | 0    |     | 7. Event   |       |            |
| 18   | 9    | 5    | 0    |     | 8. Patterns  |       |            |
| 8  | 4    | 2    | 0    |     | 9. Age   |       |            |
| 4  | 2    | 1    | 0    |     | 10. Site   |       |            |
|  | 24   | 3    |      |     | B. HISTORY TOTAL   | 27    | (max. 60)  |
| 4  | 2    | 1    | 0    |     | 11. Continuity   |       |            |
| 14   | 7    | 4    | 0    |     | 12. Familiarity  |       |            |
|  | 4    | 0    |      |     | C. CONTEXT TOTAL   | 4     | (max. 14)  |
| PRELIMINARY TOTAL (Sum of A, B and C)              |      |      |      |     |  | 42    | (max. 100) |
| -0   | -3%  | -5%  | -10% |     | 13. Condition (From A, B and C total)                        | -2.1  |            |
| -0   | -25% | -50% | -75% |     | 14. Exterior Alterations (From A, B and C total excluding 2) | -5.25 | 77.35      |
| D. INTEGRITY                                       |      |      |      |     |  |       |            |
| ADJUSTED TOTAL (Preliminary total minus Integrity) |      |      |      |     |  | 34.65 | = 35       |

STATUS/RATING

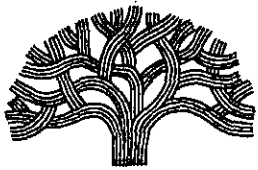
Present Rating (Adjusted Total):  A(35+)  B(23-34)  C(11-22)  D(0-10)

Contingency Rating (Preliminary Total):  A(35+)  B(23-34)  C(11-22)  D(0-10)

City Landmark Eligibility:  Eligible (Present Rating is A or B)

Not eligible

F-116 SEVALTAL.CB



# Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

## OAKLAND LANDMARK AND S-7 PRESERVATION COMBINING ZONE APPLICATION FORM

This form is for use in requesting the City of Oakland pursuant to its Zoning Regulations to establish a landmark or landmark site or to rezone one or more properties to the S-7 Preservation Combining Zone. See instructions in "HOW TO COMPLETE OAKLAND LANDMARK AND S-7 PRESERVATION COMBINING ZONE APPLICATION FORM."

### 1. IDENTIFICATION

A. Historic Name: BUDDHIST CHURCH OF OAKLAND

B. and/or Common Name: " " " "

### 2. ADDRESS/LOCATION

Street and number: 825 JACKSON ST. (FORMERLY SE CORNER 6TH ST. & JACKSON ST.) Zip Code: 94607

### 3. CLASSIFICATION

#### A. Category

- District
- Building(s)
- Structure
- Site
- Object

#### B. Status

- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Work in progress

#### C. Accessible

- Yes: restricted
- Yes: unrestricted
- No

#### D. Present Use (P) and Historic Use (H)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial    | <input type="checkbox"/> Park                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational   | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government    | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Military      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify):     |

#### E. Number of Resources within Property

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Contributing | Non-contributing                               |
| <u>1</u>     | <input type="checkbox"/> buildings             |
| <u>   </u>   | <input type="checkbox"/> sites                 |
| <u>   </u>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structures |
| <u>   </u>   | <input type="checkbox"/> objects               |
| <u>1</u>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Total      |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: BUDDHIST CHURCH OF OAKLAND

Street and Number: 825 JACKSON ST

City: OAKLAND State: CA Zip Code: 94607

Assessor's Parcel Number: 001-007900400

5. EXISTING FEDERAL/STATE DESIGNATIONS

A. Federal

- National Historic Landmark
- Included in National Register of Historic Places
- Determined eligible for inclusion in National Register of Historic Places

B. State

- California Historical Landmark
- California Point of Historic Interest
- State Historical Resources Inventory

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

| Name of Survey                   | Survey Rating (if applicable) | Date          | Depository |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|------------|
| OAKLAND CULTURAL HERITAGE SURVEY | A PRIMARY POTENTIAL           | JUNE 23, 2009 |            |

(Photo)

(SEE ATTACHED)

(Location Map)

(SEE ATTACHED)

7. DESCRIPTION

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| A. Condition:                                 | B. Alterations:<br>(Check one)              | C. Site<br>(Check one)  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered          | <input type="checkbox"/> Original Site                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved (Date <u>1950</u> ) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated       |   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins              |   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed          |   |

D. Style/Type: TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TEMPLE

E. Describe the present and original (if know) physical appearance:

THE TRADITIONAL STYLE FACADE AND MOST OF THE BUILDING HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED. TRADITIONAL EXTERIOR ELEMENTS INCLUDE THE ENTRANCE PORTICO WITH STONE LANTERNS AND BALUSTRADE, ROOF DESIGN WITH DOUBLE <sup>WOOD</sup> RAFTERS, EAVE OVERHANGS, DECORATIVE ELEMENTS, WOOD "ROOF DRAGONS" (CURVED FEATURES AT GABLES AND RAFTERS) AND SYMMETRY. IRON SECURITY FENCE ADDED ± 2004.

STUCCO WALLS (PAINTED) WITH PAINTED WOOD WINDOWS. ORIGINAL TILE ROOF CHANGED TO METAL SHINGLE ROOF SIMULATING TILE IN ± 1994.

BUILDING MOVED FROM SOUTHEAST CORNER OF 6TH ST. AND JACKSON ST. IN 1950.

BUILDING ADDITION FOR KITCHEN AND 2ND FLOOR SMALL CHAPLE ON NINTH ST. SIDE TOWARD REAR WITH FLAT ROOF IN 1974. STUCCO WITH WOOD WINDOWS TO MATCH ORIGINAL BUILDING.

ENCLOSED ELEVATOR STRUCTURE ADDITION 2006 SEPARATED BY <sup>EXISTING EXTERIOR</sup> WOODEN STAIRWAY AT REAR SOUTH OF

BUILDING. MATERIALS ARE SIMILAR TO EXISTING STRUCTURE.

TRADITIONAL NAIJIN (SANCTUARY) AT SECOND FLOOR HAS SHOJI PANELS AND IMPORTED SHRINE ELEMENTS.

(FOR MORE DETAIL SEE HISTORICAL RESOURCES INVENTORY)

8. SIGNIFICANCE

- A. Period:
- Prehistoric
  - Pre-1869
  - 1869-1906
  - 1906-1945
  - Post-1945
- B. Areas of significance—check and justify below:
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeology-prehistoric  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape architecture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> Law                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Military                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics/government               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economics               | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/humanitarian    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration/settlement  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invention               |  |

C. Period of Significance: 1920's, WORLD WAR II, POST WAR

D. Significant dates: CONSTRUCTED 1927  
RELOCATED 1950

E. Builder/Architect/Designer: GENTOKU SHIMAMOTO / OLIVER THORNTON

F. Significant persons: GENTOKU SHIMAMOTO

G. Statement of Significance (include summary statement of significance as first paragraph):

THIS BUILDING IS AN EARLY LOCAL EXAMPLE OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE AND A CENTER OF LOCAL JAPANESE-AMERICAN BUDDHIST CULTURE. IT IS BELIEVED TO BE THE FIRST BUILDING DESIGNED BY GENTOKU SHIMAMOTO, WHO WAS THE ARCHITECT OF OTHER TRADITIONALLY DESIGNED BUILDINGS IN SAN JOSE AND SAN FRANCISCO.

ARCHITECTURALLY THE BUILDING HAS MANY TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TEMPLE FEATURES: A WOOD DOUBLE-RAFTER ROOF STRUCTURE IN TRADITIONAL SHAPE WITH EXTENDED EAVES AND "ROOF DRAGON" DECORATIVE ELEMENTS COPIED FROM A SHINTO SHRINE IN OSAKA; STONE RAILINGS & LANTERNS LEADING TO A WOOD COLUMNED PORTICO WITH CARVED DECORATIVE ELEMENTS; SYMMETRICAL FACADE; SHOJI PANEELED NAININ (SANCTUARY) WITH IMPORTED SHRINE ELEMENTS AND PROSCENIUM WITH WOOD COLUMNS AND BEAMS.

(FOR MORE DETAIL SEE HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY & HISTORY OF THE BUDDHIST CHURCH OF OAKLAND BY BRIAN NAGATA, ATTACHED)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

A. Land area of property (square feet or acres): ORIGINALLY ± 11,075 SQ.FT.  
CURRENTLY ± 33,865 SQ.FT.

B. UTM References:

USGS Quadrangle Name: N/A USGS Quadrangle Scale \_\_\_\_\_

A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_

C. Verbal boundary description: 825 JACKSON ST., OAKLAND, CA 94607

11. FORM PREPARED BY APN. 001-0017900400

Name/Title: MARK SHIMAMOTO, MEMBER BCO BUILDING COMMITTEE

Organization: MARK SHIMAMOTO - ARCHITECT Date: 6.24.09

Street and Number: 1042 WARFIELD AVE Telephone: 510-465-1011

City/Town: OAKLAND State: CA Zip Code: 94610

DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY

A. Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Action by Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board  
 Recommended  Not recommended for landmark/S-7 designation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Resolution number: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Action by City Planning Commission  
 Recommended  Not recommended for landmark/S-7 designation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

D. Action by City Council  
 Designated  Not Designated









Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Ordinance No: \_\_\_\_\_

# Buddhist Church of Oakland

## Location Map



### Legend

-  Selected Features
-  City Limits
-  Parcels
-  Freeways
-  Major Sts
-  Streets
-  Water
-  Land

It is imperative that you obtain BOTH the Zoning and General Plan designations for the property(s) you are searching for.

Questions? Contact a planner at (510) 238-3911.

Printed: 6/23/2009 1:23:36 PM

# History of the Buddhist Church of Oakland

WRITTEN BY BRIAN NASATA

*KANSHA: In Gratitude.....our first 100 years*

## 1900 – 1919 Planting the Seeds of the Dharma

The first Japanese immigrants to California came from the Japanese province of Aizu Wakamatsu and settled north of Sacramento in the mid-1860's. Unfortunately, this colony of Issei pioneers was not able to survive due to harsh conditions. To this day, generations of Japanese Americans annually visit the grave of Okei, a young girl who was a member of this colony, and the first Japanese woman to die in California.

Large-scale immigration to the Bay Area started a little later, and it's said that by 1900, there were almost 2,000 Japanese Issei in San Francisco. On July 6, 1898, Reverends Eryu Honda and Ejun Miyamoto of the Hongwanji headquarters arrived in San Francisco to study the prospect of establishing a Hongwanji mission (temple) in the Bay Area.

At this time, the San Francisco Young Men's Buddhist Association was formed, and later, this organization became the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. On September 1, 1899, Rev. Dr. Shuye Sonoda and Rev. Kakuryo Nishijima arrived as the first two resident ministers for the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. The arrival of these two ministers also marked the founding of the Buddhist Churches of America.

As the early Japanese Issei pioneers started to move to other locations throughout California, temples were soon started in Sacramento, Fresno, Seattle, and San Jose.

It was in early 1901, that some young Issei, many of them in their late teens or twenties gathered together in Oakland to hear the teachings of Buddha. The Rev. Tetsuei Mizuki from the Buddhist Church of San Francisco would cross the Bay by boat to conduct monthly services and bring words of comfort and guidance to these early day Oakland pioneers. After Rev. Mizuki, Rev. Kakuryo Nishijima would come to conduct the Oakland gatherings. By the end of this year, it was decided to form the Buddhist Church of Oakland.

The first permanent church facility was secured in September of 1903, when a house on Seventh Street was rented. This same year saw the start of the Oakland Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA), the forerunner of today's Jr. and Sr. YBA. Early day leaders of the YMBA included Messrs. Tahara, Ryokaku, Murakami, Yamasaki, Okakura and Ikeda. On March 28, 1904, the Fujinkai (Women's Association) was formed, and later that year, the first Oakland Japanese Language School was established.

Rev. Mokuji Fujii from Yamaguchi Prefecture was assigned as the first resident minister for the Buddhist Church of Oakland in May 1905. With the assignment of Rev. Fujii to Oakland, the Church began to see a growth in membership and activities.

In April 1906, the San Francisco Earthquake would cause many San Francisco Issei to move to the East Bay, and this too, caused a surge in membership. In September, the YMBA would change its name to Oakland Buddhist Church.

With this increase in membership, the church moved in September to 71 Sixth Street, but even this facility did not provide enough space and the church moved again to a larger house at 313 Sixth Street.

In 1911, the State of California officially recognized the group as a church. 1911 also saw the departure of Rev. Fujii back to Japan and the arrival of Rev. Tatsugen Fukushima as the second resident minister for the church. However, Fukushima sensei's association with the Oakland members would be a short one. Within six months' time, Fukushima sensei would pass away due to illness.

After the passing of Fukushima-sensei, Rev. Gyodo Haguri was assigned as the third resident minister in November 1911. In 1913, Rev. Doshun Mizutani came to Oakland. Overseeing both the temple and Japanese Language School, Mizutani-sensei is remembered by early day members as a very strict sensei demanding discipline and order. It wasn't uncommon to be reprimanded by Mizutani-sensei if a student wasn't standing in line at attention.

In 1916, Rev. Kohan Akita from Chiba Prefecture, Japan was appointed to Oakland for three years. During this time, Akita-sensei started a kindergarten at the church for the now arriving Nisei generation. A Buddhist English school was also started in 1916.

### 1920 – 1929    *Emergence of the Nisei Generation*

With an increase in the Nisei generation, Oakland's fifth minister, the Rev. Ryugyo Fujimoto, organized the Oakland Buddhist Sunday School in June 1920. After a few months, Rev. Fujimoto would leave Oakland and later attend both Stanford and USC before being appointed to teach at Ryukoku University and later at the BCA Study Center (predecessor of the current IBS in Berkeley.)

Oakland's next minister would be Rev. Tassho Noryo from Kumamoto, but he too, would only serve Oakland a few months before being re-assigned to another temple. Rev. Noryo would also seek higher education in the US from the College of the Pacific and later Harvard University before returning to his temple in Japan.

As the temple, located on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and Alice streets grew with more and more Nisei children, it was decided to purchase a permanent place for the church. In February 1923, a large mansion on the corner of Sixth and Jackson Street was purchased. This building had a full basement, two floors and an attic. The living room was used for the hondo chapel and the adjacent dining room was used as an overflow room for the congregation. Mr. Watanabe was the custodian of this new church facility.

In the spring of 1923, Rev. Mizutani retired and the Rev. Taigan Hata was appointed the next resident minister. During Rev. Hata's tenure, it was decided to build a larger and new church facility, and under the leadership of Mr. Kikutaro Nakashima, donations and pledges were sought from the membership.

On the way home from one donation solicitation home visitation, Rev. Hata was involved in an auto accident and would wind up spending many weeks in recuperation.

Under Rev. Hata's guidance, a new young adult group called the "Kosei-kai" was formed. Early members included Nobuzo Endo, Kengo and Kenji Nakahara, Zoichi Fujise and Masao Kubose, who was later ordained as the Rev. Gyomay Kubose, and founded the Buddhist Temple of Chicago.

In 1926, due to some doctrinal differences, Rev. Hata resigned from the Oakland church and started the Kyudoshu Mission Church with his followers, located a few blocks away from the Oakland church.

This disagreement would also cause the church's Japanese Language School to split into two organizations with the church's Japanese Language school being called the "Showa Gakuen" and the other new school being called "Wanto Gakuen."

In July of 1926, Rev. Kenshi Iwao would serve as head minister of Oakland for a year before going back to Japan and then Iwao-sensei would later return to California be re-appointed to Oakland from 1929-1931.

With the growing Nisei membership, the church started the Lumbini Club in April 1926, similar to today's Jr. YBA.

Rev. Shoi Yamada, who had previously served temples in Hawaii, Singapore, Los Angeles and Seattle, was then assigned to Oakland in May 1927.

Through the dedication, determination and support of the Issei membership, a beautiful two-story temple, designed by San Francisco Nisei architect George Shimamoto, was completed at a cost of \$37,000.00 on the site at Sixth and Jackson. The former church building was then moved to another site within the church's property.

Dedicated on October 5, 1927, the celebration included a marching band, and an ochigo procession which included BCA Bishop Hosho Sasaki, other Bay District ministers and Oakland church board members.

After the celebration, the church was saddened by the death of one of its dedicated members, Mr. Keisaburo Oka, who died as a result of blood poisoning from a sliver he picked up during the construction of the temple.

Immediately after the 1927 dedication, Rev. Masao Washioka arrived in Oakland. A distinguished, well groomed man. Rev. Washioka was a graceful dancer and taught the Dharma School students Obon Odori dances. He was also a good athlete and could easily outrun the other Issei at the annual church picnics.

In July of 1928, the Young Women's Buddhist Association (YWBA) was organized.

In 1929, a fire struck the church complex and destroyed the wooden "old mansion" building. The church board then decided that a new replacement structure called the "YMWBA Building" (Young Mens/Womens Buddhist Association) would be built. This facility included classrooms, a Judo hall, kitchen, meeting room and residence for the minister and his family.

During the Depression years, covering operating costs for the temple was not always easy. Even with a substantial membership, there would be times when the church could not pay utility expenses, and individual members would have to cover the costs for these expenses from their own personal pockets.

### **1930 – 1939 Pre-war Years**

The Junior YMBA was founded in 1930 and the Junior YWBA was started in 1932. During this period, young members participated in activities of the Bay District YBA and California Young Buddhist League as well.

In the 1930's, with ever-increasing activities and programs, Oakland would see a stream of ministers sharing their skills, talents and teachings with the members. In 1932, Rev. Tokumon Aoki and his family came to Oakland. Aoki-sensei was followed by Rev. Hideo Shimakawa who would serve for six years before returning to Japan.

In the mid-1930's, a North Oakland Buddhist Society (English-speaking group) was started and led by Rev. Francis Geske. A Central Oakland Buddhist Society was also started by William Reuter and James K. Stewart. During this time, a Dr. Clark, who was an ordained Buddhist minister would come to the church on Sundays and lecture to the young people.

Rev. Tetsuro Kashima and family would arrive in Oakland in 1936 and serve until wartime evacuation. In 1938, a then-young and eager Rev. Eiyu Terao would serve for two years before going to Seattle.

At this time, the world situation was also quickly changing. On the European front, Hitler was emerging. In Asia, the Japanese military was exerting its might. Here at home, these world events also increased tensions for Japanese Americans. For centuries, the swastika with counter-clockwise facing legs (called "Manji" in Japanese) was the symbol for Buddhism. In fact the term "swastika" is actually a

Sanskrit word. The symbol was frequently used on temple designs, artwork and crests.

The original Oakland temple building had the Buddhist swastika design incorporated on its roof end tiles and entryway. However with ever-rising tensions, some of the young members of the temple felt these Buddhist "manji" symbols, even though they were the reverse of Hitler's swastika design were inappropriate for the temple. Therefore, these young men actually climbed onto the roof and removed the symbols and tiles from the building.

### **1940 – 1949    *The War, Internment & Coming Home***

Inevitably, with the coming of World War II, Oakland members immediately found themselves living within the restricted "Red Zone." All members were rounded up and most initially sent to the Tanforan Assembly Center in San Bruno (present day location of Tanforan Mall). Later, most members along with Rev. Kashima were incarcerated at the Topaz, Utah concentration camp. During the war years, the temple was used to store personal belongings of the members, since there was no indication when members would be able to return to their homes.

During these terrible war years, no one was more important to the church members than Mr. Cos Loustalot, who, despite the feelings of the times, valued and honored his friendship with his Japanese American friends. Friendly neighbors and the Loustalot family all through the war years carefully and safely looked after the church and the stored belongings.

The only major temple loss during the war years was the disappearance of a statue of Ninomiya Kinjiro (a Japanese school boy icon who represents determination and diligence in studies) which had been donated by Mr. and Mrs. Kiyochi Nobori and was placed in the Japanese Schoolyard.

With the end of World War II, members gradually began to return to the Bay Area. Rev. Gibun Kimura was dispatched to open the church for temporary housing for members and friends returning home from the concentration camps. Kimura-sensei worked tirelessly to rebuild and reorganize the Oakland Sangha. The YBA was the first organization to restart itself in 1946, and this was followed later in the year by the Dharma School and Sunday services.

In 1949, Rev. Kimura was re-assigned to the Fresno Betsuin, and Rev. Gyoyu Hirabayashi replaced him. Young and energetic, Rev. Hirabayashi continued to revitalize the temple and its membership emerging from internment.



## 1950 – 1959 Nisei Leadership, Moving the Church

In 1950, due to the construction of the Nimitz Freeway (now I-880), the church received a notice of condemnation from the State of California and would have to move from its location at Sixth and Jackson.

The church's directors, which had now become dominated by the Nisei generation, spent many hours hashing out possible solutions to the temple's forced relocation.

One idea was to move and build a new temple, the second choice was to form an East Bay church which would include members from the Alameda and Berkeley churches and build at a site on Redwood Road in the East Oakland hills or the third possibility was to move the church building to a nearby location.

The first choice was ruled out due to the fact that many members were still trying to re-establish themselves after internment. On the second option, while Berkeley members was willing to consider this proposal, the mostly Issei board members of the Alameda temple felt comfortable with their current temple.

Thus the only viable option for the Oakland church board was to move the current building to another nearby location. A 125'x125' lot was available at the corner of Ninth and Jackson, however, the board felt that they might run into opposition from the apartment complex neighbors of the property.

With his foresight and good business sense, then church president, Mr. Mitsuteru Nakashima, asked the owner of the apartment complex if the complex was available for sale, and to his surprise, he received a positive response. Mr. Nakashima, then quickly moved to purchase the apartment complex with his own funds and under his name.

Additionally, through his skillful negotiation talent, Mr. Nakashima was able to get the State of California to pay \$105,000 to the Myers Construction Company to move the church to Ninth and Jackson, and an additional \$20,000 for the YMWBA building.

In order to finalize the move, a court hearing had to be held. Only one person who lived next to the proposed site, saying that "he did not want an idol worshipping church moving next door to him" filed a single objection. But his opposition was thrown out by the judge who gave the neighbor a good lecture on Buddhism.

With the completion of the court hearing, everyone thought the church's problems were over, however, the County then informed the church that since they had no building for a place of worship on the proposed location, they would lose their tax exemption status and have to pay taxes on the property until a building was completed. In order to comply with the County ruling, token services were held on the church grounds during this interim period.

The church building then had to be moved three blocks northward to the corner of Jackson and Ninth. In order to do this, the building was cut into two pieces and slowly moved to our present location.

On July 1-2, 1950, the members celebrated the completion of the move to its new location and Mr. Nakashima transferred the title of the apartment building from his name to the church. A great deal of credit and respect must be paid to the late Mr. Nakashima for his dedication and business acumen which enabled the church to make this successful move to our current location.

Ever dedicated to the Buddha-Dharma, Mr. Nakashima said that he would not have been able to accomplish all that he did without the backing and support of the Issei and Nisei committee members. Some years later, Mr. Nakashima would make a substantial donation to the church to establish the Mr. & Mrs. Kikutaro Nakashima Endowment Fund for the purpose of funding special church programs.

This move to Ninth and Jackson Streets gave the church an opportune time for some remodeling as well. The old kitchen became the minister's office and the YBA Room next to the Women's restroom was converted into the kitchen. A very dedicated Rev. Hirabayashi spearheaded all of these and the other improvements.

At this time, the Issei pioneers realized that the next generation must take over the responsibilities for running the temple, and from 1951, the church board was comprised entirely of Nisei members, with the Issei members serving as advisors to the Board.

In 1951, the Oakland Buddhist Church Nihongo Gakuen was established and the Junior Fujinkai was started in 1953.

Rev. Kenyu Masuyama was assigned to the Oakland church in 1954 and would later serve for 14 years as head minister. In 1956, Mrs. Chizu Iwanaga started a church Children's Choir, followed by an adult choir. After 12 years, and Mrs. Iwanaga's move to Palo Alto, church member Allen Yamamoto took over leading the choir until he left Oakland to further pursue his music education back east.

In 1958, Rev. Hirabayashi would be called to Kyoto to accept a higher ranking position at the Hongwanji denomination headquarters.

## 1960 – 1969    *The Next Generation*

During Rev. Masuyama's tenure, the Issei Memorial/Dharma School building was built and dedicated in 1962 and a building next to our property was purchased for future expansion needs.

Throughout its history, the Oakland church often time served as training ground for newly arriving ministers from Japan. Rev. Keisho Motoyama served the church from 1956-1957 but has since returned to Japan and has a temple in Kumamoto. Rev. Hiroshi Futaba was in Oakland from 1950-1952 and served at various BCA temples, before completing his career serving as Rinban of the Sacramento Betsuin and is now a BCA minister emeritus. After leaving Oakland in 1963, Rev. Sensho Inouye (1960-1963) was assigned to the Los Angeles Betsuin, Rinban at the San Jose Betsuin and is now at the Buddhist Church of Fowler.

In October of 1961, the church celebrated its Sixtieth Anniversary at Goodman Hall in Jack London Square.

With the growth of the Sansei generation, branches Dharma Schools were established in Concord and the Ashland (Hayward, San Leandro and San Lorenzo areas.) Adult Buddhist groups were also started for members residing in the Concord, Walnut Creek, Orinda and Martinez areas.

To provide sports activities for the younger members, the Church Youth Club was founded in 1962, sponsoring basketball, softball and hardball teams.

Rev. Haruo Yamaoka would begin his first assignment to Oakland in 1964 for seven years before being re-assigned to the Stockton Buddhist Church.

In 1968, after fourteen years at Oakland, Rev. Masuyama was reassigned as head minister of the Gardena Buddhist Church in Southern California. In 1969, Rev. Zesei Kawasaki moved from Central California and was assigned to our church as head minister serving for five years before his retirement from the BCA ministry in 1974, and subsequent retirement to Oxnard.

## 1970 – 1979    *Continued Growth of our Sangha*

The church's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated in 1971, with over 700 members and friends joining in the celebration. This year also brought Rev. Zuikei Taniguchi from the Cleveland Buddhist Church to Oakland, and Taniguchi sensei would later start the church's Karate Club.

In 1974, the church purchased additional property at Eighth and Alice streets as an investment for future expansion.

With more and more activities and members at the church, a Small Chapel was added on the second floor and the kitchen on the main floor was remodeled. Designed by Taniguchi sensei, the Small Chapel's altar was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Sadaichi Neishi in commemoration of their Sixtieth wedding anniversary. Rev. Taniguchi's parents, the Rev. and Mrs. Yushin Taniguchi personally brought the Amida Buddha and adornments over from Japan to insure their safe delivery

In 1976, Rev. Gerald Sakamoto transferred from the Hawaii Kyodan and was assigned to our church for three years before transferring to the White River church in Washington state.

## 1980 – 1989 Passing the Dharma to the next Generation

After thirteen years at our church, Rev. Taniguchi transferred to the Alameda church in 1983. In honor of their years at our church Rev. and Mrs. Taniguchi presented the church with funds to establish a Dharma Award Fund to recognize deserving Dharma School students going into college.

The first Sansei church president, Mr. Dennis Nakamura was elected to serve in 1983 and Rev. Toshio Murakami, who had been serving at the BCA Headquarters, became our next resident minister in January 1984.

During Rev. Murakami's tenure, Mrs. Murakami once again started the Oakland church choir. Mrs. Etsuko Steimetz of Berkeley directed a highly successful summer school pilot program for Eastbay children called the Dharshana School at our church, but the program was not able to continue due to Mrs. Steimetz's passing.

Rev. Murakami's term at Oakland was only a short two years when he was appointed Bishop of the Canada Kyodan in 1986. Subsequent to serving in Canada, Murakami sensei would go on to open the first Hongwanji Sangha in Australia. At the time of Rev. and Mrs. Murakami's departure from our church, they presented the church with funds to establish a special fund to assist church youth programs.

Between the time of Rev. Murakami's departure and the arrival of our next resident minister, Rev. Kenyu Masuyama, who had retired from active BCA ministry and returned to the East Bay with his wife, was appointed as interim minister for our church. Due to his prior long assignment at our church, the members were most grateful for sensei's dedication to our sangha.

Rev. Kodo Umezu who was serving at the Los Angeles Betsuin was assigned to our church in 1987. In 1988, the Junior and Senior Fujinkai's organizations combined together to form one Oakland Buddhist Women's Association.

In 1988, in memory of Mrs. Kinoko Yoshida, the Yoshida Family donated a new shrine for the *Nokotsudo* – columbarium, located next to the main shrine in the *Hondo*.

With the election of Clifford Yokomizo as church president in 1989, three generations of Yokomizo's have served as Oakland church president, starting with

Motoemon in 1935, followed by Tony in 1953. Mrs. JoAnne Hayashida became the first woman to serve as President of the Oakland Buddhist Church in 1990.

In October 1989 the Loma Prieta earthquake struck the Bay Area, inflicting major damage on the church's rental buildings which were then demolished. The church building itself sustained only minor damage, but this earthquake gave incentive to the church to have the church and apartment buildings' foundations reinforced. The space occupied by the former rental properties was then turned into much needed parking (for weekday use by the public and weekend use by the church members).

### **1990 – 1999 The Dawn of a New Millenium**

After over sixty years since the church building was built, the roof tiles were showing wear and tear and the whole roof was retiled. In the summer of 1990, the church embarked on a \$500,000 "*Kansha Hiyaku*" fund raising campaign to pay for the necessary remodeling and repair work on the church building.

In December of 1993, the Yoshida Endowment Fund was established by church past president and advisor Mr. Eiichi Yoshida as one of his last wishes and '*dana*' to the temple. Accepted on behalf of the church by Rev. Umezu and church president Dick Sasaki, it was Mr. Yoshida's wish that the annual proceeds (interest) from the Yoshida Endowment Fund be used by the church to help offset operating costs for programs and special needs. Through this Fund, Mr. Yoshida's lifelong dedication and support to his beloved temple will continue on into perpetuity.

In 1996, Rev. Umezu was appointed Executive Assistant to the Bishop and would transfer to the BCA Headquarters in San Francisco. Rev. Haruo Yamaoka, who had just finished serving three terms as Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America, would return to our church to serve as our next and current resident minister.

Through the kindness and dedication to the Nembutsu of Mr. Toshi Nakamura, church member and owner of *Serika* Restaurant in Orinda, a beautiful, large wooden statue of Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism was placed in the entryway to the Main Hondo on the second floor. Mr. Nakamura even asked that everyone touch the statue so that the oil from our hands would enhance the color of the wood.

As we come to the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, our church is again growing with new fourth and fifth generation members joining the church and Dharma School and assuming the responsibility for carrying the torch of the Nembutsu. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century will bring our church into our second century of existence, and continuing growth and sharing the Nembutsu teaching with more and more fellow Americans.

### **2000 – 2001 A New Millenium of the Nembutsu**

On June 5, 2001, members gathered together to welcome His Eminence Monshu Koshin Ohani to our church on his visit to the Buddhist Churches of America. In preparation for this visit and for the Centennial celebration, various improvements and repairs to the temple were made. The most noticeable of these improvements was the new shrine enshrining the portrait of Rennyō Shōnin was installed on the *Onaijin*, (Main Altar). From the inscription on the rear of that original shrine, it appears that the shrine housing the Rennyō portrait was at one time the main shrine for the temple from the early 1900's. The *maejoku*, the large table in front of the Amida Buddha shrine was completely and beautifully re-furbished. New *uwajoku*, the smaller altar tables which sit in front of the three shrines were also purchased.

Other areas of upgrades and improvements included new flooring in the temple's Social Hall and kitchen. New carpeting was installed throughout the rest of the temple. A new curtain was hung on the Social Hall stage. Other improvements and minor repairs performed using the funds contributed for the Centennial Celebration included: re-furnishing of the minister's office, re-paving of the parking lot, installing a new wrought iron fence around the church, and installation of a new P.A system in the *Hondo* and Social Hall.

For one hundred years, this temple has been our second home, our spiritual home. With a deep sense of gratitude and thanksgiving, we express our appreciation to our Issei pioneers, to all of the ministers and their wives who have served our church and to countless members whose sacrifices and dedication to the life of Nembutsu have enabled us to come this milestone, the Centennial Celebration of the Buddhist Church of Oakland. Gassho,

*Namo Amida Butsu*



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: Buddhist Church of Oakland
2. Historic name: Same
3. Street or rural address: 825 Jackson St. (SW corner 9th St.), moved from SE corner 6th & Jackson Sts.  
City Oakland Zip 94607 County Alameda
4. Parcel number: 1-179-4
5. Present Owner: Buddhist Church of Oakland Address: 825 Jackson St.  
City Oakland Zip 94607 Ownership is: Public \_\_\_\_\_ Private X
6. Present Use: Japanese temple Original use: Same

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Japanese temple
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical description* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

This is a symmetrical two-story wood-frame structure basically in a T-plan slightly set back on a corner lot with the top of the T facing Jackson St. The roof is shallow intersecting gables parallel to the stem and top of the T. Covered with curved tiles, it features along each ridge and each gable edge a long clump of "logs" terminating with three short additional "logs" that are bent up as a stylized dragon's head. Such dragon heads are at all three corners of every gable. The roof terminates (below the gable ends) with deeply overhanging eaves on a layered double set of projecting rafters.

The main entry is a large portico facing Jackson Street. Up half a dozen steps from the sidewalk, it is a wide center bay flanked by a pair of narrower bays, framed by four lightly chamfered square posts and four similar pilasters. The posts support a large square lintel or cross beam with dragon-head ends. Above this crossbeam are capitals (at the posts) which in turn support the pent portico roof, which is hip shape on the sides and arched over the center bay with another "roof dragon" at its apex. The portico is approached by a broad pyramidal flight of steps (see continuation page 3)



8. Construction date: Estimated \_\_\_\_\_ Factual 1927;  
moved 1950; add'n 1974
9. Architect O.W. Thornton (des.)  
Gentoku W. Shimamoto (Assoc)
10. Builder O.W. Thornton
11. Approx. property size (in feet)  
Frontage 95 Depth 150  
or approx. acreage \_\_\_\_\_
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_

253-14 825 Jackson St., (S.W. corner of 9th St.),

5-28-82

- 13. Condition: Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  No longer in existence
- 14. Alterations: Addition on north side
- 15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land  Scattered buildings  Densely built-up   
Residential  Industrial  Commercial  Other: Park
- 16. Threats to site: None known  Private development  Zoning  Vandalism   
Public Works project  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. Is the structure: On its original site?  Moved?  Unknown?
- 18. Related features: None

**SIGNIFICANCE**

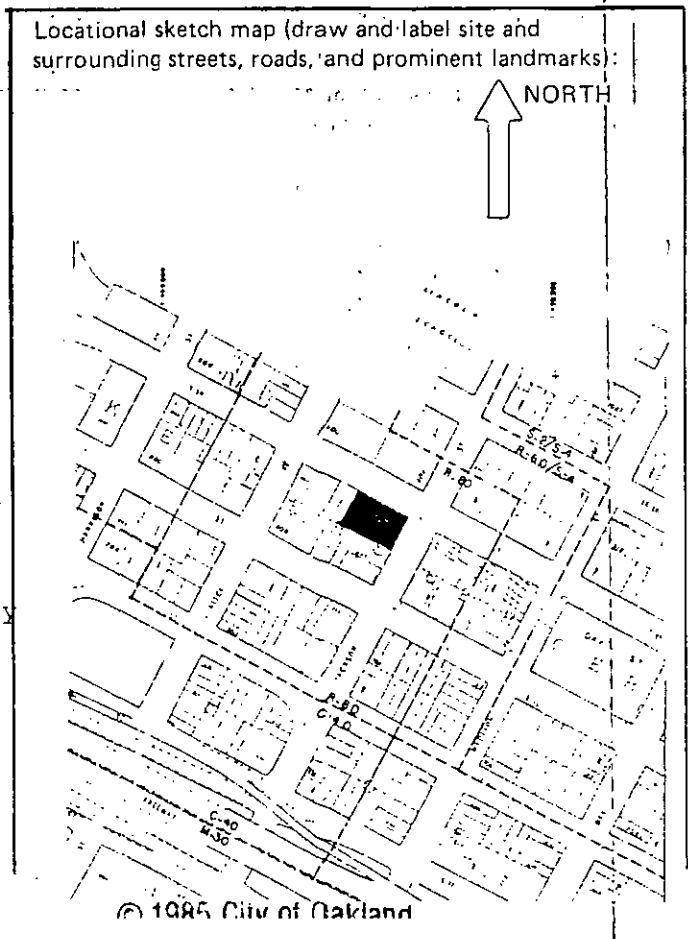
19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)  
 The Buddhist Church of Oakland appears eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as an especially fine and early local example of a Japanese temple type, as probably the first work of Gentoku Shimamoto, who may be the first Japanese-American architect, and as a long-enduring bastion of Japanese culture in Oakland.

According to its anniversary books, the Buddhist Church organization began in Oakland in 1901, just two years after America's mother church of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism was founded in San Francisco. It was served by visiting ministers until 1905. Organizing several groups within the membership, the church was incorporated in 1911, moving often to larger quarters in existing buildings. In 1923 the members bought a lot for a new building of their own, at the southeast corner of 6th and Jackson Streets. According to Rev. Murakami, the congregation advertised for a design and eventually settled on one by Gentoku Shimamoto (born in Clovis, CA, c.1908) and older board members (see continuation page 4).

- 20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)  
 Architecture \_\_\_\_\_ Arts & Leisure \_\_\_\_\_  
 Economic/Industrial \_\_\_\_\_ Exploration/Settlement \_\_\_\_\_  
 Government \_\_\_\_\_ Military \_\_\_\_\_  
 Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Social/Education 2

21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).  
Pacific Citizen, 18 Mar. 1950:2 and 15 July 1950  
 Rev. T. Murakami; interview 5 July 1984  
 Hata obit, Oakland Tribune, 23 Oct. 1968  
 (see continuation page 5)

22. Date form prepared September 30, 1984  
 By (name) Staff  
 Organization Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey  
 Address: City Planning Dept., City Hall  
 City Oakland Zip 94612  
 Phone: (415) 273-3911





HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

Street or rural address: 825 Jackson St. (SW corner 9th St.), moved from SE corner 6th & Jackson Sts.

7b. Physical Description (continued from page 1)

bordered by a heavy-membered but simple balustrade with round-topped newels. Next to the steps is a landscaped area that features carefully trained and pruned evergreens and a pair of stone lanterns.

Overall the building is faced with stucco. Windows are 6-light wooden casements in pairs, with 4-light transoms above, so that the mullions give a cross-shape. The entry pavilion has four such windows above the portico between two smaller ones; the flanking pavilions have one bay each; and each side gable has three bays. The gables are decorated with essentially 2-dimensional wooden cutouts in symbolic shapes. Behind these at the apex is trellis-work. On the south side is a wooden balcony.

A 2-story 2-bay addition is tucked behind the T-crossing on the 9th Street side. Stuccoed, it has multi-paned metal sash windows, a flat roof and flush cornice with a center row of cut-out squares. Prior to the addition's construction the church had been moved from the path of a freeway three blocks south, but apparently without significant architectural changes.

The interior consists of offices, halls, a first-floor auditorium with side balconies and a second-floor sanctuary or Naïjin occupying the rear balcony space. This Naïjin features a shrine in a raised alcove behind an entablatured colonnade as proscenium. The very ornate shrine is of black-lacquered wood with a great deal of gold encrustation. The columns are gilded; the entablature black lacquer with gold lacquer high relief panels of fishes, flowers etc. Shrine and colonnade, imported from Japan, are all fitted together without nails and come apart for cleaning, every score of years, by a special art technician who comes from Japan for the purpose. On the other side of the colonnade there is seating in pews, with shoji screens at the sides and a central hanging lamp, gold-covered, 3-4' in diameter and more horizontal than vertical.



253-16 Entry Detail, 825 Jackson St.,  
(S.W. corner 9th St.)



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

Street or rural address: 825 Jackson St. (SW corner 9th St.) moved from SE corner 6th & Jackson Sts

19. Historical and/or Architectural Importance (continued from page 2)

had not wanted to trust so young a designer, but the president urged them to give the opportunity to this one of their own people. Shimamoto is supposed to have studied architecture at U.C. Berkeley (but University records do not confirm this), and by correspondence with a famous architecture school in Japan. He practised architecture in New York after World War II and still lives there. San Francisco directories indicate he supported himself during the 1930s as an "expressman." Rev. Murakami indicated Shimamoto also designed the San Jose Buddhist Church (1937). According to Buddhist Churches of America, he designed the Buddhist Church of America's building at 1881 Pine Street, San Francisco (1937-38), to house some holy relics of Sakymuni Buddha.

Plans filed with Building Permit A24372, issued 10 Feb. 1927, indicate that Shimamoto was the associate designer with or under Oliver Thornton, "architectural designer." The permit itself shows no designer, but Thornton as contractor. Oakland directories list Thornton as a draftsman in 1925, an architectural designer in 1926 and an architect in 1927 and 1928. He may have been hired to work with Shimamoto in order to comply with legal requirements. The building was dedicated on 5 Oct. 1927...

In its new structure the church's activities grew to include clubs for most age levels, a Japanese language school, and social-welfare work. The sports program included a youth baseball team organized, managed and supplied by Mr. Cos Loustalot, a Caucasian whose interest in the church became enormously significant during World War II, when most of the church members were confined in the Topaz Center concentration camp at Abraham, Utah. During those years of trial, members stored their belongings in the church building, and the shrine section may also have been dismantled for its protection and stored. Yabuki (p.67) writes: "Nikkei (Japanese-Americans) had to sell their property ... unless they had a white-family to act as caretakers." According to the Anniversary booklets, the Loustalots were the caretakers of the Buddhist Church; they prevented the fire, vandalism and/or theft which plagued such buildings elsewhere (Buddhist Churches:65). Meanwhile, to judge from a photo of 30 "Oakland Issei (first generation: immigrant)men, Topaz Buddhist Church" (70th Anniversary:19), the members at Topaz were active in church affairs there, probably including the parent body's new incorporation as "Buddhist Churches of America" in 1944 (Buddhist Churches:69). Upon their return after the war, many of the congregation's members lived in the building as a hostel until they could find regular places to live and work.

"1950, in March another relocation took place. This time to the temple building itself. Due to the construction of the Nimitz Freeway, the church was moved from 6th and Jackson Streets to its present location at 9th and Jackson" (70th Anniversary:19). Building Permit B30478, filed 24 Feb. 1950, and the accompanying plans and specifications indicate that the building was changed at the time of moving only to the extent of additional seismic reinforcing and fire safety exit equipment. J.Y. Long Co. were the engineers, Myers Construction Co. the contractors. Photos show it was cut in two just behind the T-crossing to get it through the streets, and Sanborn maps show it was turned around so that the entrance which had faced north now faces east.

(continued on page 5)



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

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19. Historical and/or Architectural Importance (continued from page 4)

Building permits additionally record some interior alterations in 1962, structural alterations to underpinnings in 1966, heating replaced in 1974 and plumbing alteration in 1976. 75th Anniversary (18-19) pinpoints the exterior addition (kitchen expansion and Little Chapel above) in March 1974.

The building is related to Japanese temple architecture in details rather than in plan, since its sequence of rooms is vertical rather than the traditional horizontality probably because of the size of the available site. The landscaping, stone lanterns, balustrade and portico all copy Japanese precedent. The "roof dragons" copy those on the Shinto Shrine at Osaka. The rigid symmetry, the tile roof, overhanging eaves on double rafters and the Naijin itself are all traditional.

21. Sources (continued from page 2)

Buddhist Church of Oakland, 70th Anniversary, 1971

75th Anniversary, 1976

Buddhist Churches of America, Chicago 1974, Nobart, Vol. I:

43-69, 141, 173-75, 187-91

Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan, 1983: 68-69

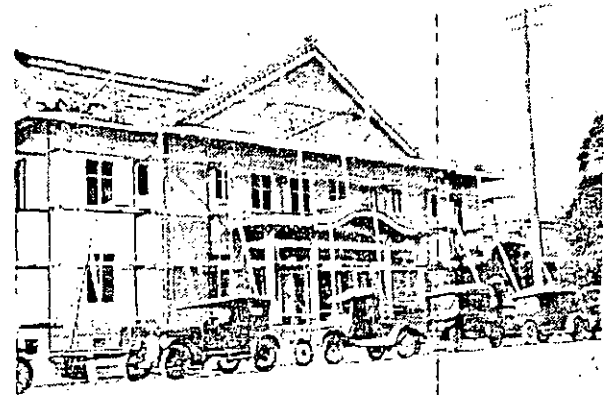
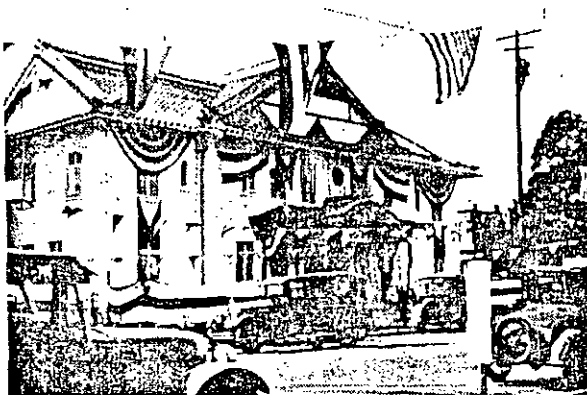
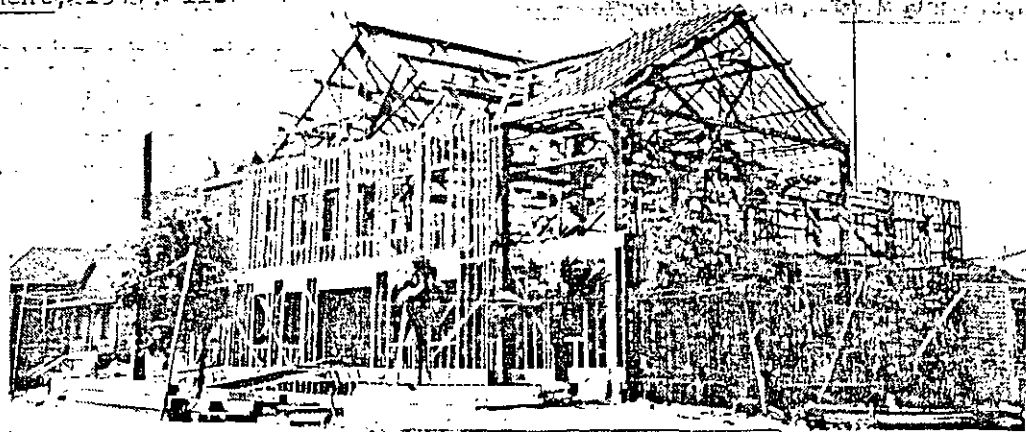
Dean Yabuki, "The Japanese in Oakland", Oakland Heritage Alliance

News, Fall 1983: 1-7

Building Permits, Plans and Specifications

Franklin Oda, In Movement, 1977: 112

Source: Buddhist Church of Oakland, 70th Anniversary, 1971



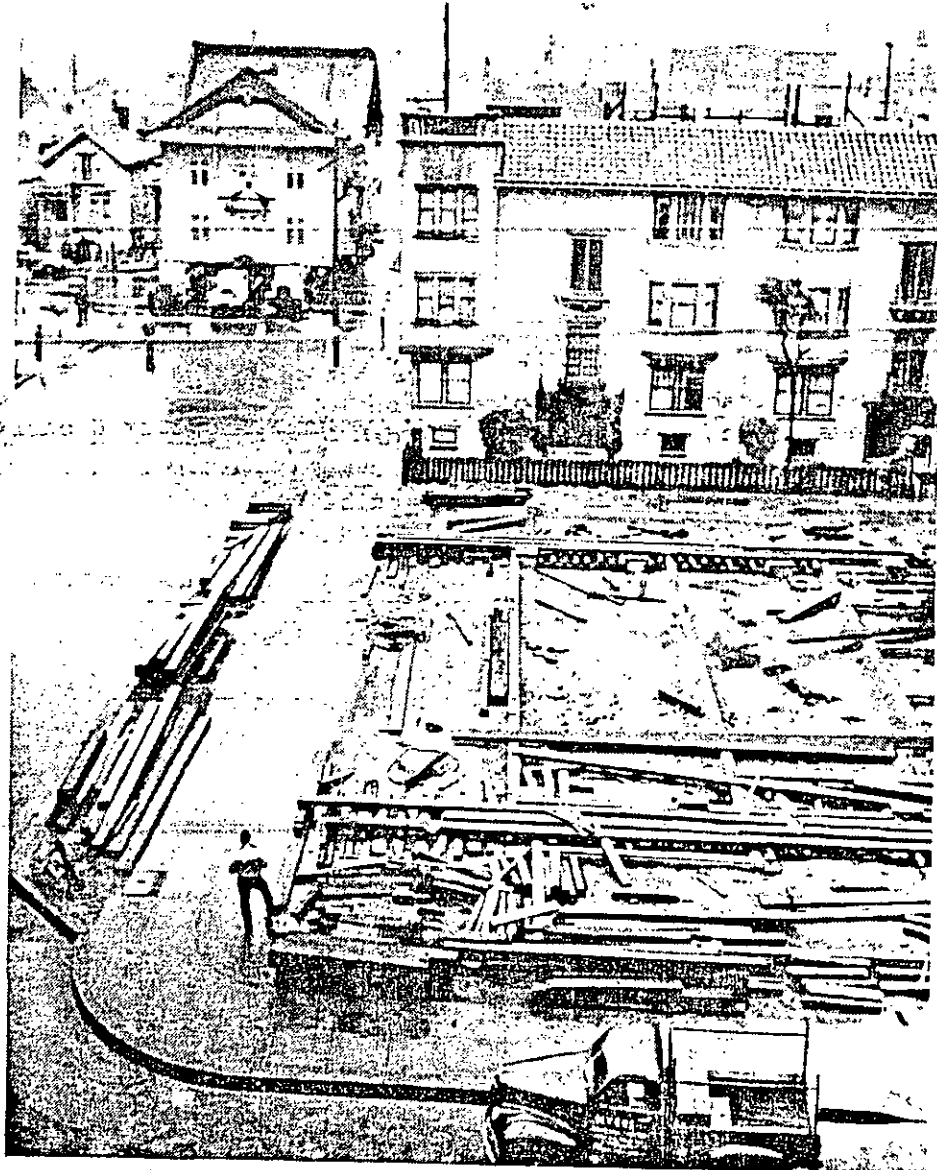
TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION, 1927



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

Street or rural address: 825 Jackson St. (SW corner 9th St.), moved from SE corner 6th & Jackson Sts.



TEMPLE RELOCATION, 1950

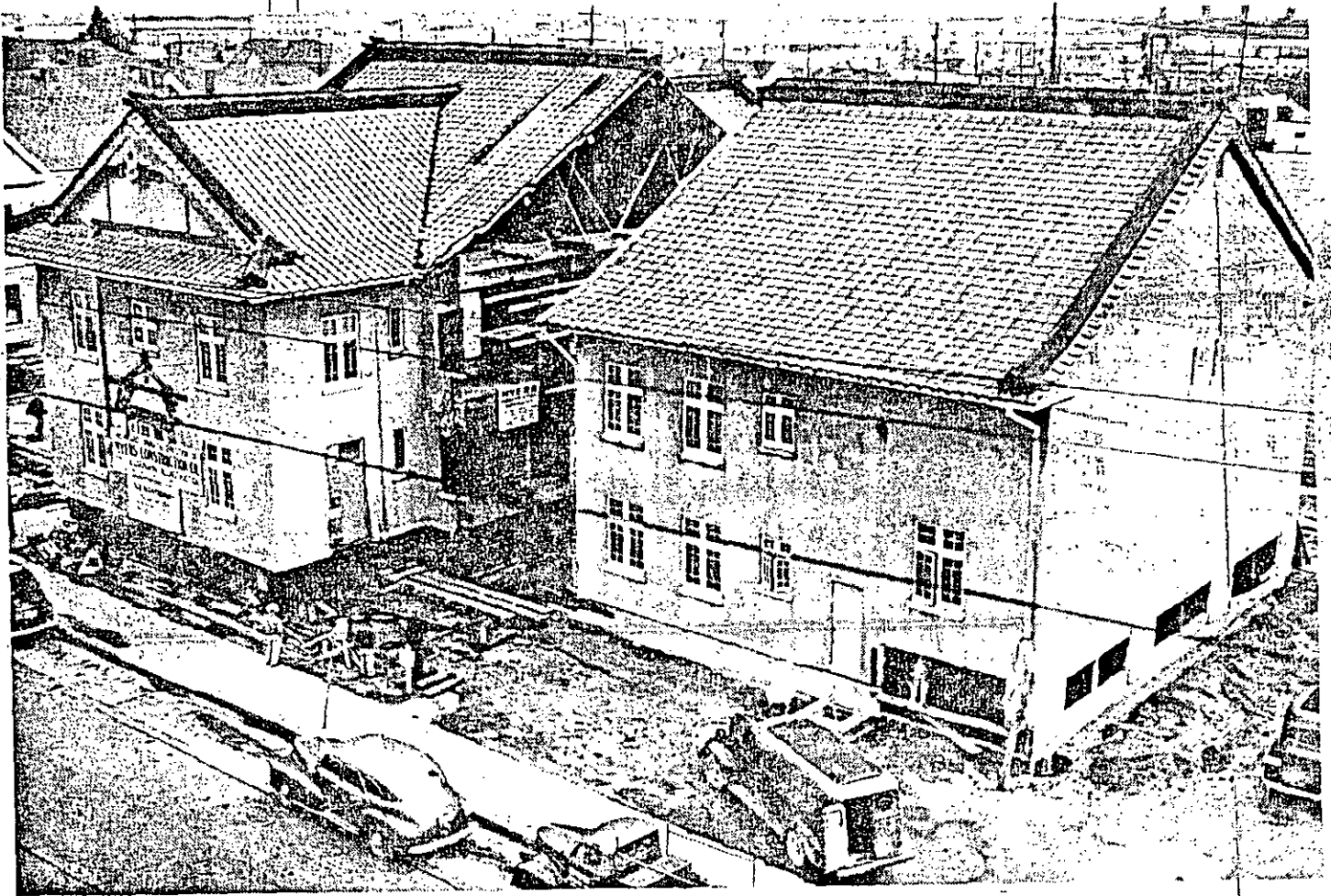
Source: Buddhist Church of Oakland, 70th Anniversary, 1971



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

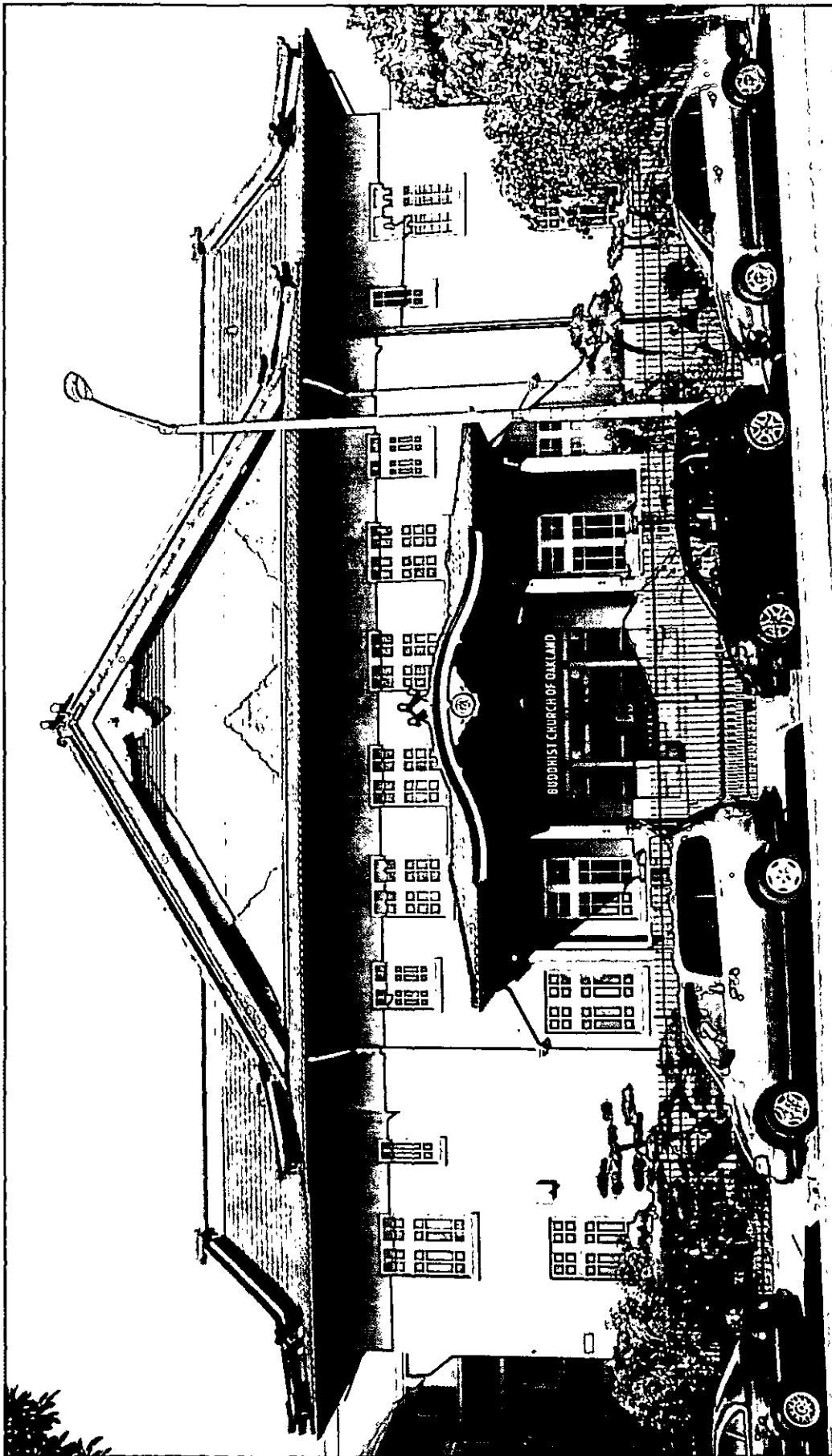
CP

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NEW SITE. NINTH AND JACKSON, 1950

Source: Buddhist Church of Oakland, 70th Anniversary, 1971

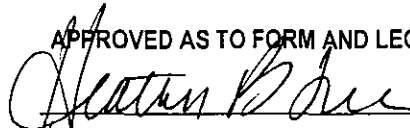


**Buddhist Church of Oakland  
825 Jackson Street**



INTRODUCED BY COUNCIL MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
OAKLAND

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY

  
City Attorney

2010 APR -1 PM 1:07 **OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL**

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.**

**AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE BUDDHIST CHURCH OF OAKLAND AT 825 JACKSON STREET AS A LANDMARK PURSUANT TO SECTION 17.136.070 OF THE OAKLAND PLANNING CODE.**

**WHEREAS**, the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, at its duly noticed meeting of December 14, 2009, recommended designation of the Buddhist Church of Oakland at 825 Jackson Street as a Landmark pursuant to Section 17.136.070 of the Oakland Planning Code; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Planning Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing on January 20, 2010, and at the close of the hearing voted unanimously to recommend landmark designation of the property; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council's Community and Economic Development Committee, considered this matter at its April 13, 2010 meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council, at a duly noticed public hearing on April 20, 2010, determined that the proposed Landmark has historical and architectural significance as described and presented in the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Resolution 2009-1, and is a unique asset to the City; and that for these reasons the Landmark is worthy of preservation; and

**WHEREAS**, the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) have been satisfied, and pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3), 15305, 15308, 15331, and 15183 of the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14) each as a separate and independent basis, this ordinance is exempt from CEQA; now therefore

**THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** The Buddhist Church of Oakland at 825 Jackson Street is hereby designated as a Landmark pursuant to Section 17.136.070 of the Oakland Planning Code as described and presented in Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Resolution 2009-1, attached as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference.

**SECTION 2.** Said Landmark shall be preserved in all its particular exterior features as existing on the date hereof, and as described and depicted in the photographs, case reports, Case File LM09-240, and other material in the Department of City Planning; provided, however, it may be modified to replicate or more closely resemble its original appearance.

**SECTION 3.** The Development Director is hereby directed to execute and cause to be recorded in the Recorder's Office of the County of Alameda a notice of designation of said Landmark.

**SECTION 4.** This ordinance complies with CEQA and the Development Director is directed to cause to be filed a Notice of Exemption with appropriate agencies.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, \_\_\_\_\_

**PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:**

AYES- BROOKS, DE LA FUENTE, KAPLAN, KERNIGHAN, NADEL, QUAN, REID, and  
PRESIDENT BRUNNER

NOES-

ABSENT-

ABSTENTION-

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
LaTonda Simmons  
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council  
of the City of Oakland, California

DATE OF ATTESTATION: \_\_\_\_\_

RESOLUTION 2009-1  
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
CITY OF OAKLAND

**Buddhist Church of Oakland**  
**825 Jackson Street**

WHEREAS, a proposal to designate the following property as an Oakland Landmark pursuant to Section 17.144 of the Oakland Planning Code has been considered by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed and examined the material pertaining to this property in Case File LM09-240 and the Oakland Landmark Nomination Application form, a copy of which is attached; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that the property meets the landmark designation criteria found at Section 17.07.030P of the Planning Code and the Board's Guidelines for Determination of Landmark Eligibility in that the property:

- is an early local example of traditional Japanese temple architecture, featuring a roof with curved tiles, deeply overhanging eaves with a double set of projecting rafters, and carved wood stylized dragon's heads modeled after those from a Shinto shrine in Osaka, Japan; wood railings and stone lanterns leading to a wood-columned portico with carved decorative elements; and Japanese style landscaping, including bonsai pines and a Bodhi tree;
- is believed to be the first building designed by Gentoku Shimamoto, a prominent Japanese-American architect who designed other traditional Japanese style buildings in San Jose, San Francisco, New York and New Jersey;
- was used as a safe place to store the personal belongings of church members who were interned at the Japanese internment camp in Topaz, Utah during World War II, and was later used by many church members returning from the internment as a hostel until they could find regular places to live and work;
- was moved from its original location at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Jackson Street in 1950 due to the construction of the Nimitz Freeway;
- has served as the focal point for Japanese-American Buddhist culture in Oakland for over 80 years; and
- continues to serve as a vital cultural center for Oakland's Japanese-American community by hosting various community events, sponsoring a Japanese language school, providing classes in Japanese cultural arts, sponsoring youth basketball teams, and providing many other programs and forms of support for church members.

**EXHIBIT A**

And WHEREAS, an Evaluation Sheet for Landmark Eligibility has been prepared for the property in accordance with the Board's Guidelines for Determination of Landmark Eligibility; and

WHEREAS, the Evaluation Sheet shows that the property meets the Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed and accepted the Evaluation Sheet, a copy of which is attached; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that this property merits Landmark designation, protective regulations, and preservation for the enjoyment of future generations;

Now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board hereby initiates, under Section 17.144.030C of the Oakland Planning Code, action to establish as a Landmark the following:

HISTORICAL NAME: Buddhist Church of Oakland  
COMMON NAME: Buddhist Church of Oakland  
ADDRESS: 825 Jackson Street  
DATE BUILT: 1927. Moved 1950.  
ARCHITECT: Gentoku Shimamoto, Oliver Thornton  
ORIGINAL USE: Buddhist church / temple  
PRESENT USE: Same  
PARCEL NUMBER: 001-0179-004 00

And be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That this property shall be preserved generally in all its exterior features as existing on the date hereof or may be modified to restore, replicate, or more closely resemble its original or other historical appearance; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That this action be forwarded to the City Planning Commission for public hearing and consideration;

Approved by the Landmarks Preservation Board,  
Oakland, California: December 14, 2009

ATTEST: Jean Parline, Secretary

# **NOTICE & DIGEST**

**AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE BUDDHIST CHURCH OF OAKLAND  
AT 825 JACKSON STREET AS A LANDMARK PURSUANT TO SECTION  
17.136.070 OF THE OAKLAND PLANNING CODE.**

This Ordinance designates The Buddhist Church of Oakland as a City of Oakland  
Landmark.