

REDEVELOPMENT OF SAN FRANCISCO JAPANTOWN

by

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION - PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nihonmachi¹ is located in the Western Addition area of San Francisco. At one time the Nihonmachi community encompassed over twenty city blocks, but today it is only recognized to be four city blocks. Most of the structures in the area were built before 1900², and for over 30 years the Western Addition has been undergoing redevelopment. The idea behind redevelopment is for government to stimulate controlled development to revitalize a declining area, using public funds to purchase land and prepare it for development.

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency was formed in 1948 and administers the redevelopment program for the city in several areas in San Francisco. The Western Addition Area A-1, which includes a large portion of Nihonmachi was the first project started by the Redevelopment Agency and by 1957 the A-1 project was in the implementation stage. In 1961 planning for the Western Addition Area A-2 project was started, virtually surrounding the A-1 project and including the remaining area in Nihonmachi. Implementation of the A-2 project started in 1966. According to the Redevelopment Agency, the redevelopment of Nihonmachi

¹Nihonmachi is Japanese for Japantown, and is commonly used to designate the area.

²San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Report on the Redevelopment Plan for the Western Addition Approved Redevelopment Project Area A-2, (San Francisco: 1964), Appendix A, Table 7.

is 80% complete³, and the Agency is actively working to complete redevelopment in Nihonmachi.

The Redevelopment Agency is a governmental body, and this study will analyze the Redevelopment Agency from a public administration viewpoint. The effectiveness of the administration of the redevelopment process will be analyzed and the influence of community groups on the Redevelopment Agency will be examined. Also the change in the housing patterns before and after redevelopment in Nihonmachi will be quantified.

Since its inception, redevelopment has been closely scrutinized and criticized from all fronts. It is highly visible to the public, has a large budget, and directly impacts large numbers of people. Redevelopment is seen in some neighborhoods as something that is unwanted, resulting in the dispersal and destruction of the community. City officials often praise redevelopment as the best way to clear the city of urban blight, yet they don't always lend full support to redevelopment projects because of the controversy around some of them.

One of the major criticism of the Redevelopment Agency and redevelopment as a whole is the controversy over replacement housing for those displaced by redevelopment. The question that is often raised is around the issue of whether or not a family or individual has a right to remain in their community. Housing referrals outside the original communities are often met with resistance and resentment. This is particularly true in the ethnic communities and with small businesses in danger of losing their established clientele. The housing in

³Statement by Gene Suttle, Western Addition Area Director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, 1979.

San Francisco has historically been scarce and the market today is especially restrictive. This complicates the problems of relocation faced by the Redevelopment Agency, and is an issue that groups opposing redevelopment continuously cite.

Redevelopment has had a major effect on the Nihonmachi community. Not only has the size of the community grown smaller, but its character has changed from a primarily residential area to a tourist and commercial oriented area. The administration of the redevelopment process has been an area that the Redevelopment Agency has been criticized about. Evictions, use of eminent domain by the Redevelopment Agency, and claims of inadequate community input into the redevelopment planning process have caused an adversary relationship between the Redevelopment Agency and some community members in Nihonmachi. Others in the Community do not necessarily hold this same feeling towards the Redevelopment Agency, but do show concern about the changes happening in Japantown.

In times of scarce housing, rising housing costs, and declining governmental expenditures, any kind of governmental involvement in housing brings attention to itself. Businessmen, government officials, politicians, and ordinary citizens all become involved in the process. This high visibility along with a high level of involvement of many parties make redevelopment an interesting and controversial topic.

It is my intention that this study be used as an educational tool by the Nihonmachi community, and other communities undergoing redevelopment, to help them to be able to take constructive action to see that redevelopment is done in a manner that protects their interests and rights.

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Redevelopment

The first large scale attempt to prevent further deterioration of cities came in 1937 in the form of a federal slum clearance and housing measure. Federal financial assistance was used by cities to clear blighted areas and replace them with publicly constructed and owned housing run by local public agencies called Public Housing Authorities. Though this did not occur on a large scale in San Francisco, it set the precedent for future public agencies to carry out what we today call redevelopment.

With the end of World War II, housing problems that were set aside due to the war effort became important issues. War industries attracted large numbers of people to the cities and many remained after the war. Many of those who could afford to do so moved out to newly created suburbs, leaving the less fortunate to live in the deteriorating inner city. These declining areas did not attract new development and property values continued to fall.

California, in 1948, recognized that something needed to be done to stop the deterioration of its cities and passed the California Community Redevelopment Law. This state law authorized the creation of local redevelopment agencies and gave them state sanction to carry out state policy concerning redevelopment. The policy was described as

follows:

"To protect and promote the sound development and redevelopment of blighted areas and the general welfare of the inhabitants of the communities in which they exist by remedying such injurious conditions through the employment of all appropriate means."¹

Along with the powers, such as eminent domain, given to local redevelopment agencies, the state requires that a report be submitted to the legislature for each redevelopment plan. The report must contain the following items:²

1. The reasons for the selection of the project area.
2. A description of the physical, social, and economic conditions existing in the area.
3. A financial analysis of the proposed redevelopment.
4. A method or plan for the relocation of families and persons to be temporarily or permanently displaced from housing facilities in the project area.
5. An analysis of the preliminary plan.
6. The report and recommendations of the planning commission.

On the federal level a parallel sentiment developed which resulted in Congress passing the Omnibus Housing Act of 1949 which provided federal monies for urban renewal (redevelopment) in addition to public housing. This act had a major impact on almost every large, established city in the United States, including San Francisco.

The program allowed the federal government to provide two-thirds of the project costs for pre-approved urban renewal plans. Federal funds financed the acquisition and disposition of land, the relocation of

¹San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Report on the Redevelopment Plan for the Western Addition Approved Redevelopment Project Area A-2, (San Francisco: 1964), page 19.

²San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, op. cit., preface.

residents and businesses, and all other activities necessary to prepare for redevelopment. The city must provide the remaining one-third of the costs, usually in the form of non-cash public improvements such as street widening, sewers, and storm drains. The federal commitment was for the life of the redevelopment projects as determined in the approved project plan.

Initial reaction to such a major national program received varied responses. Some business interests saw the program as socialistic. However, once business interests saw the advantages they could get from urban renewal, they were quick to capitalize on them.

The first urban renewal projects were the "slum clearance" type. Blighted areas would be emptied of their inhabitants and physically cleared for its new use. This soon resulted in public outcry when commercial and industrial sites replaced their former community.

In 1954 Congress reacted by adding some safeguards to urban renewal programs. A "Workable Program of Community Involvement" was required by each city receiving federal funds for urban renewal. This new requirement emphasizes four basic areas:

1. Code adoption and enforcement programs in both blighted areas and basically sound, but deteriorating neighborhoods geared toward eventual city-wide compliance with the codes.
2. Establishment of an overall plan which provides for a comprehensive framework for a city-wide plan, addressing physical, social, and economic problems related to urban renewal.
3. Development of a program for relocation assistance for displaced families and businesses including increasing the housing supply for low and moderate income families.
4. Establishment of programs to achieve meaningful involvement of citizens in the urban renewal process.

These changes did not completely solve problems with urban renewal. Citizens involvement often meant involvement of businessmen, civic leaders, and politicians creating a somewhat biased perspective. Also, relocation programs were often found to be inadequate. During the 1960's, urban unrest rocked the country. Urban renewal was not solving the problems of the inner cities and in some cases urban renewal was the underlying cause of the unrest.

Another major change at the federal level came in 1968. Congress passed the 1968 Housing Act which encouraged homeownership among the poor and emphasized housing for low and moderate income families in future renewal projects. Also added emphasis was placed on rehabilitation whenever possible as an alternative to clearance. This major shift was in response to the public outcry against previous urban renewal projects and the resulting adverse financial effects public sentiment had on the projects.

A new method of funding urban renewal came into existence under the 1968 Housing Act, called the Neighborhood Development Program. Its provisions calls for yearly submittals of an application for federal urban renewal funds for the entire city. This program was designed to give redevelopment agencies as well as the federal government more flexibility in their programs. It also frees the federal government from long-term financial commitments.

1968 was also the year when the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) required that new projects involving residential rehabilitation are required to form a Project Area Committee to be involved in renewal planning and execution.

Another change in priorities started in the early 1970's. It still called for the construction of low and moderate income housing but

in a non-discriminatory way outside areas of concentration of economically disadvantaged or minority citizens.³ This put added restrictions on redevelopment of inner city areas.

In 1974, another major change in funding federal domestic programs took place. In an effort to decentralize governmental involvement in certain domestic programs, Congress passed the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. Federal "block grants", the sum determined by a formula based on indices of poverty, population, and the extent of housing overcrowding, are given to cities. Eligible uses for these funds include code enforcement, redevelopment, model cities, water and sewer projects, urban beautification, and historical preservation. Cities have considerable discretion as to how they distribute and spend the money, and federal funds may be used to finance 100% of project costs.

These Community Development Block Grants are presently the major funding source for redevelopment projects in San Francisco.

History of Nihonmachi

San Francisco was one of the primary points of entrance for immigrant Japanese at the turn of the century. The first Japanese American community in San Francisco was in the South Park Area, near Third and Bryant Streets.⁴ After the 1906 earthquake and fire, the Japanese American community moved near Chinatown.⁵ Over the next few

³San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association, A SPUR Report on the San Francisco Redevelopment Process, (San Francisco: 1972), page 7.

⁴Asian Community Television services, Nihonmachi: Urban Renewal or Community Removal? (San Francisco), page 2.

⁵Ibid.

years the Japanese American community moved to the Western Addition area where it has remained ever since.⁶

In 1882, with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Chinese were prohibited from emigrating to the United States. The Japanese were heavily recruited for agricultural work to replace the Chinese. Their numbers grew until 1908 when the Japanese government was forced to agree to limit the immigration of Japanese laborers under the Gentlemen's Agreement. In 1924 the Japanese were totally excluded from emigrating to the United States. By this time Nihonmachi had become a thriving community in the Western Addition. Nihonmachi contained many small businesses and family residences; however, Japanese immigrants were barred from owning land due to the Alien Land Law of 1913, so most homes and businesses were leased.

On February 19, 1942, Executive Order 9066 was issued and all people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast were forced to leave their homes to go to inland concentration camps. This action, coming after the declaration of war against Japan, culminated years of racist feeling toward Japanese Americans and was led by political and economic interests who had much to gain by the imprisonment of the Japanese Americans. Nihonmachi literally became devoid of Japanese Americans overnight. For about the next three years, while its former residents were confined in the concentration camps, Nihonmachi had no Japanese residents.

At the close of the war, most of the former residents of Nihonmachi returned to resettle in Nihonmachi. Many were hesitant to return to their former communities because of uncertainties as to how they would

⁶Asian Community Television Services, Nihonmachi: Urban Renewal or Community Removal?. (San Francisco), page 2.

find work again, how the local residents would react to them, and many other reasons specific to each family. Many were financially damaged from the abrupt evacuation and long internment, having to sell businesses and possessions within days and virtually no income for the last few years. There was also the psychological aspects of being imprisoned by your own country. So the Japanese Americans returned to Nihonmachi confused, bitter, and psychologically and financially damaged.

To the returning Japanese Americans, their community was different than what they had left. Others were occupying the homes they had lived in and businesses had to be started all over again. The social structure of the community was also damaged by the concentration camp experience. Organizations and clubs promoting Japanese culture and customs declined in their stature in the community, and in their efforts to prove their loyalty to the United States, some Japanese Americans promoted an "All American" image of Japanese Americans. This was manifested by overcompensation with traditional American values in the lives of Japanese Americans. This was to become a factor in some of the community's feelings toward redevelopment.

Nihonmachi Today

Nihonmachi has grown considerably smaller over the years. Later chapters will quantify this change. As land values and rents have risen, families have moved out and many single family residential homes were demolished in favor of commercial establishments and market rate apartments. These apartments and the proximity of Nihonmachi to the downtown area has attracted many white collar workers who can afford the higher rents. Also since the building of the Japan Trade Center, there has been

a significant influx of Japanese newcomers (immigrants) to the area who work at the trade center or restaurants in the surrounding area.

These changes in the social character of the community are significant. There are still Japanese American families in the area but not nearly as much as before. It is not the intent of this project to determine if white collar workers, newcomers, or any other changes are a good or bad influence in the community, but to show the part redevelopment played in this transformation.

Although Nihonmachi doesn't have the Japanese American population it once had, it still is the center for Japanese American activities in the Bay Area. There are many organizations that provide services to Japanese American residents such as Kimochi, a program that provides services to elderly Japanese American; Japantown Community Youth Council, which provides services for the youth in the area; Nihonmachi Little Friends, a bicultural-bilingual day care center; and Nihonmachi Legal Outreach, which provides services in the legal area to Nihonmachi residents. There are also many Japanese cultural organizations such as those providing dance and language instructions and other arts programs. There are many other political, social, and educational organizations based in Nihonmachi serving the diverse needs of the modern Japanese Americans. Also, Nihonmachi remains a place where Japanese Americans from all over the Bay Area come to shop, eat, visit, and go to church. With the building of the Japan Trade Center, Nihonmachi has become a tourist attraction. The significance of this will be discussed later in this paper. Today redevelopment is almost complete in Nihonmachi. The remaining property the Redevelopment Agency owns in Nihonmachi is

slated to be sold this year for a new construction or rehabilitation.⁷

Literature Review

Because this topic is rather specialized, few published accounts of redevelopment in Nihonmachi are available. There are many books on urban renewal, but few deal with specific types of communities such as Nihonmachi. Because the Redevelopment Agency is a public agency and is required to publish reports from time to time on their projects, along with public relations materials, there are many Redevelopment Agency documents available containing facts and figures on San Francisco redevelopment projects. However, these facts and figures are not always specific to Nihonmachi because Nihonmachi is in parts of the Western Addition A-1 and A-2 projects. Additional information came from discussions with Redevelopment Agency Staff.

Demographic data on how the housing situation has changed during redevelopment was obtained using Polk's City Directory. This directory lists occupants by street addresses. Using this directory the changes in housing structures was quantified. Also Japanese surnames were counted to get a rough feeling of how the number of Japanese surnamed households have changed over the years due to redevelopment. The city directory runs from 1953 to the present.

To get a perspective from "outside" the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, several sources were used. A book titled Yerba Buena: Land Grab and Community Resistance in San Francisco by Chester Hartman, provided a good critical analysis of redevelopment in San Francisco.

⁷Statement by Gene Suttle, Western Addition Area Director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, January 31, 1980.

The Yerba Buena project was a "clearance-type" project to build a massive convention center in the South of Market area. Strong community resistance caused delays in the project and the Redevelopment Agency was not able to carry out the project to completion until a compromise with displaced residents was made. The controversy around the Yerba Buena project was occurring about the same time as resistance was building in the Western Addition projects (late 1960's to early 1970's), so many parallel observations of Redevelopment Agency actions could be made.

Another evaluative report on San Francisco Redevelopment was found in a document titled The SPUR Report on the San Francisco Redevelopment Process. The San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR) published this report in 1972, during the time when the Redevelopment agency was a target of many groups challenging their projects. However, as will be discussed in more detail later in this paper, SPUR had a biased viewpoint in favor of redevelopment. Information from this document was used with the bias recognized.

For information specific to Nihonmachi, a major source was literature put out by a Nihonmachi based community organization called Committee Against Nihonmachi Evictions (CANE). Though their resources could not develop highly detailed, technical analyses of redevelopment in Nihonmachi, CANE's files provided a wealth of information from the community's perspective.

Chapter 3

OBJECTIVES

Throughout this project certain assumptions are made concerning redevelopment in Nihonmachi. It is from these assumptions that the objectives were developed and how the issue of redevelopment is presented, analyzed, and interpreted.

The first assumption is one that most will agree with. It is that redevelopment in some form was needed in Nihonmachi. With many of the structures in the area being built around the turn of the century, replacement or rehabilitation of some sort was necessary. Many of the buildings were not meeting safety code standards and badly needed repairs. Also problems with traffic congestion, parking, lighting, and other collective problems needed to be dealt with. An area redevelopment plan was needed, but the one that was developed was not necessarily the best approach.

A second assumption to be made is that there is a need for low to moderate income housing in Nihonmachi. Before redevelopment, rents were substantially lower, and low to moderate income housing was much more available. In a process like redevelopment where housing is destroyed and replaced by more housing, at least an equal amount of the same priced housing should be made available after redevelopment. Nihonmachi is like any other inner city ethnic community where the people living there are 'working class' people of low to moderate income. Housing in the community should reflect the needs of the community.

Where housing is scarce city-wide, as it is in San Francisco, equal replacement housing is of even greater importance.

The last assumption, community preservation, can be tied to the second assumption. Through careful planning with community input, a community can be preserved and improved in a redevelopment project. Community preservation is based on the community's right to exist as a unique entity and the right of its residents to live in them. Ethnic communities are special cases of communities that need to be preserved. Their cultural and social interaction cannot be developed anywhere else. These communities provide unique services to groups of people that would not be possible to a dispersed population. It is important to remember that it is the people who make up the community, not the physical arrangement of the community. Nihonmachi bears little resemblance to the Nihonmachi of the past.

There are three objectives that are presented in this paper. They are to quantify the dispersal and change of character of the Nihonmachi community, to examine how redevelopment works in Nihonmachi, and to examine the impact of community involvement in the redevelopment process.

The first objective is a quantification of the housing changes in Nihonmachi. There is no doubt that Nihonmachi has grown smaller in size and population since redevelopment started in 1956. To my knowledge there has been no study to quantify this change in the community except in very broad terms. It is important to know these changes in the community to show what effect redevelopment had on it. The quantification is shown graphically over a 27 year time span (1953-1980) and points out changes in housing characteristics, commercial and tourist

developments, and other indicators of change in the community. From this quantification, and with an understanding of what role development played in this change, conclusions are drawn about redevelopment in Nihonmachi.

The second objective has to do with the understanding of how redevelopment works in Nihonmachi. Specifically, how the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency works and why it makes the decisions it does. To start, one must look at the administration of the Redevelopment Agency, its Board of Commissioners, and staff. Also of importance is where the funding for the projects comes from and what the City and County of San Francisco expect from the Redevelopment Agency. The Redevelopment Agency has changed over the years in response to pressure from other government agencies and from the public. Because it is relatively a new endeavor, and is controversial in nature, the Redevelopment Agency must be adaptive to the political climate of San Francisco. The Redevelopment Agency has played and continues to play a major role in Nihonmachi. The understanding of the Redevelopment Agency and the process of redevelopment is vital if one wishes to understand why Nihonmachi is the way it is today.

The last objective is to examine what community input into redevelopment is allowed or sought. As with any governmental body, the Redevelopment Agency must hold public hearings on its projects and get the necessary approval from various public bodies, but public participation should not stop here on projects that directly affect so many people as redevelopment does. One problem with the Nihonmachi community is that it is so small when compared to the city as a whole and even compared to the Western Addition. Nevertheless, redevelopment has

stirred a lot of activity in Nihonmachi both for and against various aspects of redevelopment and both sides have asked for participation in the process. An analysis of the participation of community groups in Nihonmachi is presented to determine if the level of community participation was adequate.

From these three assumptions and objectives, an analysis of what redevelopment has done to Nihonmachi over the years and how it could possibly be done better is presented. Also, even though redevelopment is almost complete in Nihonmachi, there are still sites being planned and it is possible to make the remaining redevelopment better serve the Nihonmachi community's needs. Redevelopment is an ongoing process in communities all over the country and it is hoped that this study will help others understand the process of redevelopment and how to make it beneficial to their communities.

Chapter 4

RESEACH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

An understanding of each of the three objectives stated in the last chapter is important for a full understanding of redevelopment in Nihonmachi. The study of an ethnic community like Nihonmachi cannot be done exclusively from the outside with library materials. It is important to interact with the community to get a feel for its uniqueness and to meet with its residents to find out how they feel about the community. For an understanding of the Redevelopment Agency as an organization, it is important to talk with some of the individuals who work within the organization. It is also important to talk with community organizations based in Nihonmachi to understand their perception of redevelopment and also to help understand the power structure and dynamics of the community. An understanding of the history of Nihonmachi and of Japanese in America also gives insights into what is happening in the community today. It is with this background that research was done on this project. Most of the facts and figures came from books and publications, but the scope and direction of this project was guided by discussions with people and organizations in Nihonmachi and my experiences in the community.

Quantification of the Dispersal of the Community

A quantification of the change in size and character of the community is necessary to visualize the change the community has undergone since redevelopment started in 1956. It is acknowledged by everyone

that Nihonmachi has grown smaller in area and its Japanese American population has declined drastically over the years, but this change has never been detailed.

Polk's City Directory was used for the quantification. This directory lists names by street addresses, thereby making it possible to isolate an area and see how its residents have changed over the years. Businesses, restaurants and other non-residential buildings are listed also, giving a complete picture of the area. This particular directory is only available from 1953 to the present. For this study, this is sufficient since redevelopment officially started in the Western Addition in 1956. Since there are very few developable sites left in Nihonmachi, it is possible to project what the final redeveloped Nihonmachi will be by visually confirming the current Polk's City Directory with what is there today and using the Redevelopment Agency plans for the remaining sites. The amount of subsidized housing was counted and figures on the demand for this type of housing is presented. Also rents on some market rate housing in Nihonmachi are listed to show the increase of housing costs due to redevelopment.

This quantification basically covers three things, the size of the community, housing characteristics of the community, and the Japanese population of the community. The size of the community is not an easily quantifiable item. Different people will have different perceptions of where the borders of the community are and these perceptions will change over time. For simplicity, I used a set percentage of Japanese surnamed families on a reach of street to determine if the area is considered part of the community. Housing characteristics were monitored by looking at changes in type of structure on a site. Quantifying the Japanese

population of Nihonmachi cannot be accurately done using Polk's City Directory, because the directory lists only the head of the household. No indication of the number of others living in the unit is given, therefore the figures from Polk's City Directory can only be used for comparison purposes over the years.

There are certain inaccuracies and assumptions that need to be pointed out with this quantification. Non-English speaking ethnic communities have historically been misrepresented in surveys and censuses. The accuracy of Polk's City Directory cannot be assured to be exact in all cases. Therefore data coming from Polk's City Directory is only used to show trends and estimates, rather than in refined statistics.

Another problem comes when trying to define the community. Some non-Japanese Americans in Nihonmachi have always been a part of the community, and today with the decline in the Japanese American population in Nihonmachi, non-Japanese Americans play an even greater role. When using the percentage of Japanese surnamed households as an indication of some change in Nihonmachi, it is important to recognize this fact.

This quantification shows the change in the community over the years, but does not address what caused this change. Redevelopment obviously had a major effect, but it is hard to measure this. It is possible to count the number of housing units lost to major projects such as the Japan Trade Center, and Saint Mary's Cathedral, but information is not readily available on smaller projects that the Redevelopment Agency initiated. It is also not possible to determine where those relocated by redevelopment moved to and what they thought about moving. Data from other sections on redevelopment and community input gives some insights on what this quantification means in Nihonmachi.

Understanding Redevelopment

Redevelopment as a process is relatively new, starting in the 1950's. The understanding of the process of redevelopment is straight forward, but how it applies to different projects dealing with different communities makes it more complicated. In Nihonmachi the governmental body that administers redevelopment is the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. Since it was formed in 1949, the Redevelopment Agency has had major projects in several different areas in San Francisco. This study only concerns itself with redevelopment in Nihonmachi, but to get a broad understanding of redevelopment, it is necessary to go to the whole Redevelopment Agency.

The structure and decision making process of the Redevelopment Agency is presented and analyzed. Its funding sources and connections with the private sector developers is also examined. Because San Francisco is a highly political city, local politics have an influence on how the Redevelopment Agency is run. The influence of elected politicians on redevelopment is also discussed. A chronological sequence of redevelopment in Nihonmachi shows how redevelopment occurred in Nihonmachi and gives some insights on changes the Redevelopment Agency went through as redevelopment proceeded.

Interviews and discussions with individuals who work within the Redevelopment Agency gives some insights on how the Redevelopment Agency works as an organization. Up to date information came from participating in meetings between the Redevelopment Agency staff and community groups in Nihonmachi. Because individual personalities generate different opinions, information gathered from interviews and discussions were not used to analyze the Redevelopment Agency as a whole, but were used to

find out general facts about the Agency and how those who work within the organization view the work of the Agency.

Given this understanding of redevelopment in Japantown, it is possible to analyze how effectively the Redevelopment Agency is administering redevelopment in Nihonmachi. It is also possible to see if the Redevelopment Agency has met its goals as stated in earlier planning documents. Most of the information for this section came from Redevelopment Agency documents or publications about the Redevelopment Agency.

Community Input

Community groups have always played an important part in the workings of the Nihonmachi community. Some community groups are active around redevelopment issues and have had an impact on redevelopment in Nihonmachi. Using informal interviews and discussions with different individuals and groups, it is possible to understand what groups have the most influence, both positive and negative, on redevelopment. Two groups that I have found to have the most influence are the Committee Against Nihonmachi Evictions (CANE) and the Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation (NCDC).

CANE¹ was formed in 1972 out of concern for preserving what remained of their community while redevelopment was proceeding. In the past they demonstrated against evictions and redevelopment in general, and did tenant organizing and education. They were moderately successful in getting the Redevelopment Agency to build some additional low and

¹CANE has recently changed its name to the Japanese Community Progressive Alliance (JCPA).

moderate income subsidized housing and have slowed down the redevelopment process a little, but they were not able to stop redevelopment. NCDC on the other hand, had cooperated with the Redevelopment Agency. NCDC was formed in 1964, made up of local businessmen concerned about what redevelopment would do to their businesses. They have been working with the Redevelopment Agency and have protected their interests by taking advantage of the commercial part of the Nihonmachi redevelopment plan.

In researching these organizations I examined their relationship with the Redevelopment Agency and how it affects redevelopment. CANE has undergone some significant changes since its inception in its dealings with the Redevelopment Agency and these changes will be discussed. NCDC has not been active in recent years, but still exists and is recognized by the Redevelopment Agency.

Another community development corporation, Japanese Community United for Housing (JCUH, Inc.) was recently formed in March of 1980. This non-profit organization was formed specifically for developing low rent housing in Nihonmachi. Its board of directors are from broad sectors of the Nihonmachi community, including individuals from CANE. They have been negotiating with the Redevelopment Agency for a site to develop. The progress of this group along with its significance to the future of Nihonmachi is discussed.

I have access to CANE's files and have found much information of redevelopment and the Nihonmachi community as a whole. These files were used extensively in this section to understand the relationship between CANE, NCDC, and the Redevelopment Agency. Using these files along with conversations and interviews with other people in the community, a view

of redevelopment from a community perspective is presented.

The view of redevelopment in the community is obviously diverse. There is no concensus on the matter, but people do come together on certain issues such as the need for a community center, or more low and moderate income housing. These two items can be a part of a redevelopment plan if the community and the Redevelopment Agency can get together, plan it out, and locate funding. This is a real possibility for some of the remaining sites in Nihonmachi today and the possibility of this happening, in light of the history of redevelopment in Nihonmachi and the administration of the Redevelopment Agency, is examined.

Chapter 5

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Redevelopment

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency is an instrumentality of the State of California. It works on behalf of and under the policy direction of the City and County of San Francisco. It uses for this purpose Federal funds received from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and local contributions, mostly in the form of public works and facilities.¹

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency works like many other redevelopment agencies in cities throughout the country. Being somewhat autonomous from the city, the Redevelopment Agency can make and implement its own plans, move people and business out of areas, arrange for massive funding for its project, condemn property, and issue bonds.

The Redevelopment Agency is governed by a board of five commissioners appointed by the mayor. The staff consists of professional planners in urban design and economics who plan for redevelopment of areas and coordinate the implementation of redevelopment by review and approval of specific plans. Having such powers, it is no surprise that business interests have expressed great interest in the work of the Redevelopment Agency.

¹San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, San Francisco Redevelopment 1967-68, (San Francisco: 1968), page 29.

History

The general thrust of redevelopment in San Francisco is guided by the Master Plan for the city. This Master Plan is a part of a larger master plan for the whole San Francisco Bay area. The Bay Area master plan designated San Francisco as the center for services, such as administration, finances, business consultation, and entertainment. The Peninsula was designated as an area for light manufacturing and electronics, Northern East Bay for oil refining, and the Greater East Bay for heavy industries and the regional transportation center.

This type of regional planning first appeared during World War II. The Metropolitan Defense Committee was the Bay Area's first regional planning agency. This body was composed of political appointees and influential citizens (mainly businessmen) and made many region-wide decisions affecting transportation, workers' housing, and the location of industrial facilities.²

Though the Metropolitan Defense Committee eventually disbanded towards the end of World War II, it set the precedent for further regional planning activity. In 1945 the Bay Area Council was formed to guide region-wide planning in the Bay Area. The Bay Area Council was, and still is, made up of business interests. Their chief concern is to provide an environment that is conducive to promote business.

This exemplify this point, funding for the first years of the Bay Area Council came from the following six companies: Bank of America, American Trust Company, Standard Oil, Pacific Gas and Electric, U.S. Steel,

²Chester Hartman, Yerba Buena: Land Grab and Community Resistance in San Francisco, (San Francisco: 1974), page 34.

and the Bechtel Corporation.³ The first board of directors consisted of top leaders of the following companies: Central Bank of Oakland, Pacific Gas and Electric, Bechtel Corporation, S & W Foods, Foremost-McKesson Corporation, U.S. Steel, and Southern Pacific Railroad.⁴

The bulk of the Bay Area Council's work focused on transportation and industry location, but the council had always been a strong supporter of urban redevelopment. Because most of the corporate headquarters of big business were located in San Francisco and that San Francisco was designated in the master plan as the center for business, it was natural for the policy makers of the Bay Area Council to look at expanding the business district in San Francisco and to provide the necessary supporting housing.

In order to carry out business interests at a local level, the Bay Area Council formed local committees involving Council members. In 1956, the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee was formed. This committee was formed by Charles Blyth, a prominent stockbroker and director of the Hewlett-Packard electronics firm and J. D. Zellerbach, the paper magnate. Their first task was to start the process to redevelop San Francisco's wholesale produce market area. The Blyth-Zellerbach Committee donated \$50,000 to the City Planning Department to conduct a study on the wholesale produce market area, which eventually became the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's Golden Gateway Project.

In an effort to continue to be involved in redevelopment but not be so visibly business oriented, the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee fathered

³Hartman, page 34.

⁴ibid.

an organization called the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR) in 1959. For the first three years of SPUR's existence, SPUR was totally funded by the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee. In following years the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee continued to be the major source of funding for SPUR.

Although the influence of the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee and the Bay Area Council were slightly diluted with the formation of SPUR, big business interests still dominated SPUR with several of the directors of SPUR coming from the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee and the Bay Area Council. In its publications SPUR downplays its big business orientation. For example, SPUR describes itself as follows:

...an organization of citizens working for a better planned and more attractive San Francisco; for sound programs of housing in all price ranges; for more efficient transportation systems; and for imaginative regional planning to guide the rapid development of the Bay Area.⁵

SPUR's role in the redevelopment process was essentially of advocacy, but they became quite powerful in San Francisco and worked closely with the Redevelopment Agency. In 1960, Mayor George Christopher designated SPUR as the official "citizens group" for urban renewal in San Francisco to comply with federal regulations.

It is quite apparent that redevelopment in San Francisco has, from the outset, been heavily influenced by business interests. Although the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency was officially formed in 1948, before the formation of the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee, its operations were limited during most of the 1950's. The staff of the Redevelopment

⁵San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association, SPUR Newsletter, (San Francisco: 1966), page 4.

Agency was small and not exceptionally well versed for the tasks they were trying to do. The first executive director, James Lash, was fired in 1953. His successor, Eugene Riordan, who was not able to do any better than Lash, retired in 1959.

The year 1959 marked the turning point for the Redevelopment Agency. It should be noted that 1959 was also the year that SPUR was formed. In this year M. Justin Herman was appointed the executive director of the Redevelopment Agency. Herman had previously served as the administrator of the San Francisco Regional Office of the Housing and Home Finance Agency (the predecessor of the Department of Housing and Urban Development). He had a good working knowledge of redevelopment in San Francisco and was committed to the kind of redevelopment that the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee and SPUR were pressing for.

Under the direction of Herman, the staff of Redevelopment Agency rose to several hundred (compared to about 60 before Herman's appointment). The number of projects increased substantially and close working relations with the mayor's office developed. The governing board of the Redevelopment Agency also changed substantially under Herman's tenure. Businessmen appointed by the mayor, but generally acceptable to Herman, brought their business perspectives to the Redevelopment Agency board. With this support for Herman's business oriented policies, Redevelopment Agency was able to carry out their projects without substantial opposition.

It was said, by those who knew Herman well, that they regarded him as tough, a perfectionist, someone who relished controversy, and a man who wanted to leave his mark on the world through physical monuments.⁶

⁶Hartman, page 51

It was this personality that guided the Redevelopment Agency into its massive projects of the 1960's until Herman's unexpected death in 1971.

The Redevelopment Agency Today

The current executive director is Wilbur Hamilton. As a youth, Wilbur Hamilton, a black person, grew up in the Western Addition ghetto. He was a fighter pilot in the Korean War and eventually was ordained in the Pentecostal Church. While studying to be ordained, Hamilton began a career with American President Lines. While being a representative of the powerful International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union (ILWU) Mayor Joseph Alioto appointed Hamilton to the Redevelopment Agency board in 1969. Within a few months, Hamilton applied for and received a Redevelopment Agency staff job as director of the Western Addition A-2 project. From this position Hamilton became executive director in 1977.

The current Redevelopment Agency Commissioners (or board) are listed on Table 5-1. The present board of commissioners shows individuals with more diverse backgrounds than early commissioners where there was a more obvious trend towards business interests. Still, because appointments are made by the mayor, they are political in nature and special interests tend to be appointed to the board of commissioners.

The Western Addition Project

This project was designated as the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's first project by the Board of Supervisors on August 2, 1948.⁷ The project was consistent with the recently approved Master Plan for the City and County of San Francisco. This plan included redevelopment

⁷San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, San Francisco Redevelopment Program, (San Francisco: 1977), page 2.

Table 5-1

1980 Redevelopment Agency
Board of Commissioners

President, Howard M. Wexler, Attorney with Feldman, Waldman,
and Kline.

Vice-President, Parree Porter, Paster, First A M E Zion Church.

Charlotte Berk, Past President, League of Women Voters of San
Francisco.

Dian Blomquist, Business Administrator, former coordinator of the
Bay Area Woman's Coalition.

Rubin Glickman, Attorney, Real Estate Expert.

Melvin Dong Lee, President of Pacific Automatic Sprinkler Company

Joan-Marie Shelly, Teacher, Lowell High School.

projects throughout the city, and Nihonmachi was designated as a high density residential area and as a commercial center.⁸

The decline of the Western Addition started after the 1906 earthquake and fire. The fire was contained east of Van Ness Avenue, so the Western Addition was relatively undamaged.⁹ The need to house the many displaced people, caused the Western Addition to grow suddenly. Property owners quickly converted their homes into boardinghouses, and apartments became hotels. Also street level floors of houses became storefronts. As San Francisco recovered, the Western Addition also returned to normality.

During World War II, many people were attracted to San Francisco to work in the war industries. The Western Addition with its "left-over" capacity to accept a high number of people quickly, became a settling place for many. After the war, and the ensuing slowdown in the economy, the Western Addition became a low-income ghetto. In this state the Western Addition became the first choice for undergoing redevelopment.

A-1 area is 108 acres along the Geary Expressway, essentially between Broderick Street and Franklin Street. Plan development and approval by the City Planning Commission, Redevelopment Agency, and the Board of Supervisors was completed by May 28, 1956. Funds for the actual physical process of redevelopment became available shortly afterwards on December 27, 1956. The project was officially completed on

⁸San Francisco City Planning Department, Master Plan for the City and County of San Francisco, (San Francisco: 1945), map 27.

San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Report on the Redevelopment Plan for the Western Addition Approved Redevelopment Area A-2, (San Francisco: 1964), page 1.

March 30, 1973.¹⁰

The A-2 project soon followed the A-1 project. Approval by the City Planning Commission, Redevelopment Agency, and the Board of Supervisors was completed on October 13, 1964. Funds became available on June 30, 1966.¹¹ The A-2 area almost totally surrounds the A-1 area and encompasses the rest of Nihonmachi plus much more of the Western Addition, totaling 277 acres. The A-2 project is still continuing today.

The A-1 project, being one of the first redevelopment projects, was a "clearance-type" project and was a mixture of residential, commercial, and institutional development. The problems associated with the A-1 project led to an emphasis on providing low-to-moderate housing in the A-2 project. This emphasis is apparent in the objectives for the A-2 project listed below:¹²

1. Elimination of blight and blighting influences existing in the project through the application of the means available under the Community Redevelopment Law including: owner participation, rehabilitation of structures, acquisition, clearance, and sale of cleared land to public and private developers for redevelopment and use in accordance with the provisions of the redevelopment plan.
2. Creation of an attractive, primarily residential community which is socially and economically integrated and which contains ample public facilities and healthy commercial areas convenient to the residents. This new Western Addition will be achieved through the preservation of sound existing properties thus maintaining historical continuity and through the allocation of land for various uses in amounts calculated to be in sound balance, and through the establishment of controls on development designed to assure an esthetically pleasing as well as functionally sound environment.

¹⁰San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, San Francisco Redevelopment Program, (San Francisco: 1977), page 2.

¹¹ibid.

¹²San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Report on the Redevelopment Plan for the Western Addition Approved Area A-2, (San Francisco: 1964), page 19.

3. Expansion of the economy of the City by strengthening business development in the general business area adjacent to Van Ness Avenue, and by reestablishing such community business areas as the Fillmore Center and the Nihonmachi on a functionally sound basis through expansion or consolidation. This will be done by making cleared land available for new investment in a sound environment, and by strengthening the tax base through new and more appropriate development and use of the area.
4. Creation of a more efficient street system to handle both through and local traffic effectively and to create, in residential areas, a safe and quiet environment.

The most distinctive feature of the A-1 project, in the Nihonmachi area is the Japan Trade Center. This \$15 million complex occupies a five acre portion of the A-1 area. In an effort to bring some large scale commercial development into the A-1 project, the Redevelopment Agency looked for help from Japan. National-Braemar, Inc., headed by people from San Francisco and Hawaii, approached Kinki Nippon Railway Company Limited of Japan to invest in Nihonmachi. On October 11, 1961 Kinki incorporated as a business, Kintetsu Enterprises Company of America and in 1962 National-Braemar received permission from the Japanese Government for Japanese capital to be invested in the Japan Trade Center.¹³

National Braemar, became the developers of the complex, and Kintetsu became the biggest landowner in the complex. Kintetsu, as a subsidiary of Kinki, was very appropriate to participate in the development of the Trade Center. Kinki, through 170 companies, either as subsidiaries or related enterprises, is involved in all phases of transportation, recreation and tourism. Kinki owns a chain of Miyako

¹³San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Japanese Cultural and Trade Center, (San Francisco: 1968), page 3.

Hotels and is involved in numerous overseas ventures.¹⁴ As the A-2 project developed, Kintetsu expanded into the Nihonmachi area to build a bowling alley and a motor inn.

The Redevelopment Agency supported this kind of development to bring more tourism into San Francisco and to reinforce the "cosmopolitan" image of the city. However, the Japan Trade Center was not as much of a success as was hoped, as many of the shops were left vacant for many years. To date, the Japan Trade Center has not lived up to its expectations as a major tourist attraction.

In many respects the A-2 project was quite different from the A-1 project. Because the A-1 project was the first redevelopment project in the Western Addition, community input into the redevelopment process was minimal. However, in the A-2 project, community residents were able to look back at the A-1 project and were prepared to be involved in redevelopment. One of the major issues concerned relocation of residents. Many of the people required to relocate for the A-2 project were the same people who had to be relocated out of the A-1 project area.

New federal regulations required that project area committees be formed and financed in redevelopment projects. This allowed some of the Western Addition residents a real voice in the redevelopment process. The Western Addition Project Area Committee (WAPAC) was formed and was involved in approval of hiring Redevelopment Agency consultants, selection of developers, and planning for the types of housing to be constructed.¹⁵ This type of involvement complicated the redevelopment

¹⁴Committee Against Nihonmachi Evictions, One Year of Struggle, (San Francisco: 1974), page 14.

¹⁵San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association, A SPUR Report on the San Francisco Redevelopment Process, (San Francisco: 1972), Appendix 4.

process and the Agency found that it could not progress as fast as it did in the A-1 project, but this community involvement probably reduced the massive community resistance that would have occurred if redevelopment had proceeded as it did in the A-1 project.

In Nihonmachi the toll the A-1 project took on residents and local businessmen was quite apparent. The Redevelopment Agency, feeling pressures from the Nihonmachi community and having to live up to public statements stating that it was in the Agency's interest in preserving structures as much as possible and encouraging the formation of a property-owners committee to keep in close contact with the Agency,¹⁶ had to make a commitment to the Nihonmachi community to work together on the A-2 project in Nihonmachi. This commitment eventually led to an agreement of preserving a four-block area in Nihonmachi to be developed by Nihonmachi property owners. An unwritten clause to this agreement was that the Redevelopment Agency would be allowed to redevelop the rest of Nihonmachi and the surrounding area as they pleased.

As part of the agreement the Redevelopment Agency helped develop the four-block area, paying for the site preparation work. The Redevelopment Agency claims this to be a \$250,000 gift to the local community.¹⁷

Another part of the A-2 project in Nihonmachi that the Redevelopment Agency often cites is the Japanese American Religious Federation (JARF) project. The JARF project consists of 245 apartments; 175 studios

¹⁶Sheridan Tatsuno, "Politics and Economic Effects of Urban Renewal on Ethnic Communities: A Case Study of San Francisco's Japantown", Amerasia Journal, 1, No. 1 (March 1971), page 40.

¹⁷Hokubei Mainichi (San Francisco), March 24, 1976, p. 1, col. 5.

and one-bedroom homes for individuals and couples over 62 years of age and 70 one-, two-, three-, and four-bedroom homes for families. One third of these units will be federally subsidized to make them affordable to low-income people.¹⁸

JARF is made up of eleven Japanese American churches of different faiths all based in San Francisco. The non-profit project was financed under Section 236 of the National Housing Act. The federal government pays all mortgage interest in excess of 1%. This creates a subsidy that makes most projects affordable to moderate-income households.

The JARF project was widely supported by virtually all of the Nihonmachi community. A problem did arise when the Redevelopment Agency attempted to change priority listing for people applying to move into the project. The original contract, signed by JARF and the Redevelopment Agency gave first priority to those currently residing in the A-2 area and are facing eviction or those who have been evicted from the A-2 area. The conflict developed when the Redevelopment Agency wanted to expand the priority listing to include people from other redevelopment projects. The JARF board voted this proposal down, but this action by the Redevelopment Agency did not leave a favorable impression on the Nihonmachi community.

Goals

The goals of the Redevelopment Agency have naturally changed over the years. Goals set in the 1950's centered around clearance of blighted areas and the development of housing for the growing business

¹⁸San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Nihonmachi Terrace, (San Francisco), page 1.

district and commercial sites. As community resistance formed and public outcry became vocal, these goals shifted, to some extent, toward concern for residents of redevelopment areas. These goals have evolved to the following goals taken from a 1977 Redevelopment Agency report.¹⁹

1. An honest and dedicated effort to restore buildings and institutions wherever possible - for the future would be flat and barren, especially in San Francisco, without preserving and enhancing the richness of our past.
2. A program designed, with the help of new vital tools, to keep middle class families in the City through creation of much needed middle-income family housing and stimulation of employment opportunities.
3. New commercial development which is designed to be in character, in style and in harmony with the uniqueness of San Francisco and its neighborhoods while working closely with and not against the City's neighborhoods.

Though these goals have been "softened" by adding verbiage to placate those who criticized the Redevelopment Agency for being unresponsive to community concerns, the major thrust of the goals remain essentially the same, to retain the middle-class and stimulate commercial development.

Funding

To meet these goals, there is a heavy reliance on federal funding. Early redevelopment projects, including the Western Addition A-1 and A-2 projects, were funded by a program created by the Housing Act of 1949 where the federal government pays two-thirds of project costs and the city pays the remaining one-third, usually in the form of non-cash public improvements. In order to qualify for this type of funding, the redevelopment plan must be approved by the city government, and an

¹⁹San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, San Francisco Redevelopment 1976-1977, (San Francisco: 1977), page 2.

application for the entire project must be submitted to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The costs involved in redevelopment projects are, basically, land acquisition, relocation of residents, demolition, site preparation, and administration. To get a net project cost, proceeds from land sales must be subtracted out. During the project, the federal government provides the funds necessary to carry out project activities, resulting in the federal government essentially loaning the Redevelopment Agency their one-third share.

The city's one-third share can be paid back in several ways. The most simple way is by cash grants out of the city's general fund. In San Francisco, non-cash credits have been the major source to pay the city's share. Most of these credits came from public projects within the project areas or sufficiently proximate so that they can be said to benefit the project. These public projects include sewers, storm drains, parking facilities, road improvements, and even the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system. Another method allowed by the federal government is to use the temporary tax loss that occurs when land is removed from tax rolls during redevelopment as credit against the local one-third share. However, any increase in tax revenues after redevelopment does not have to be added to the city's share.

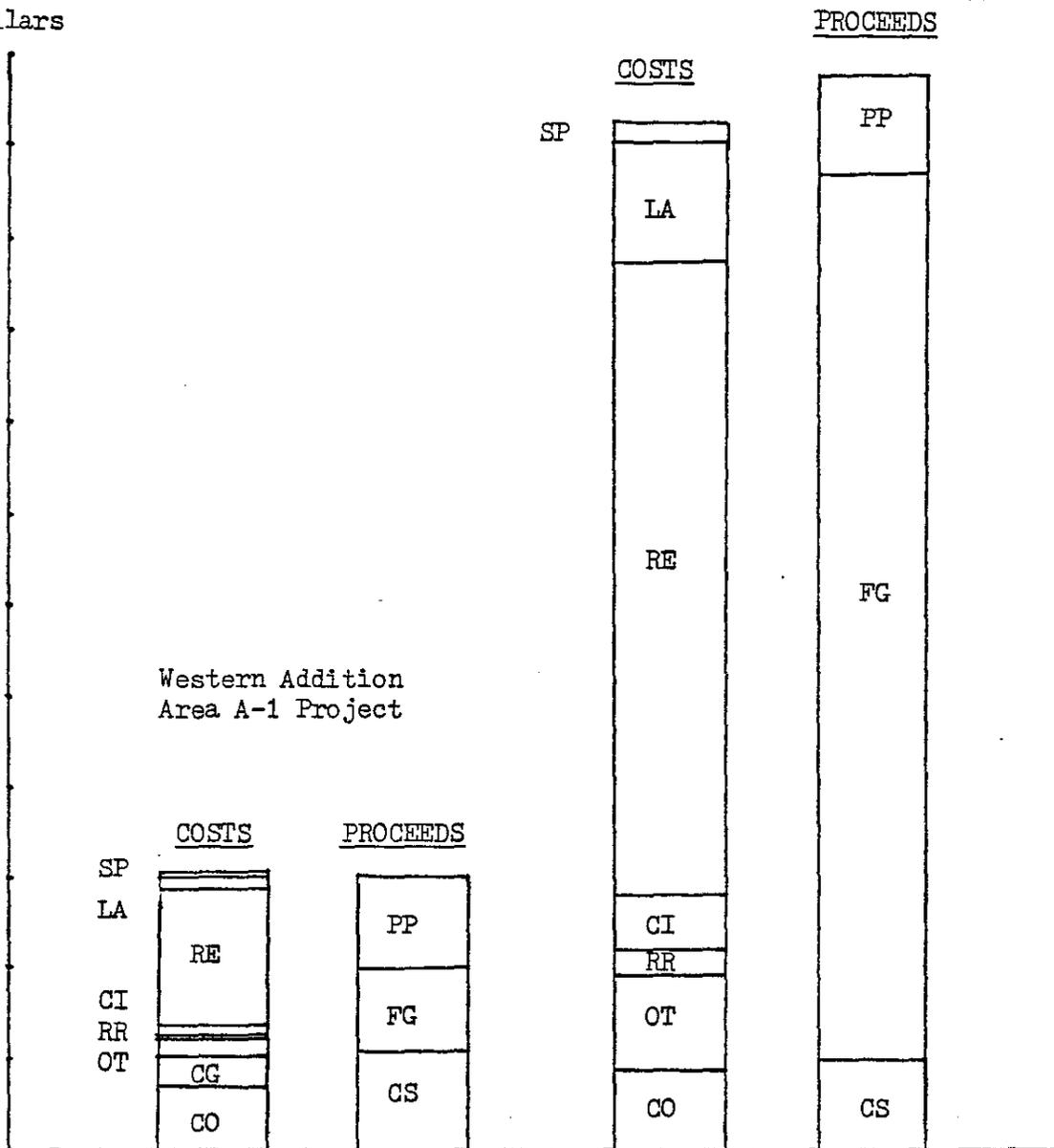
An interesting aspect of the use of credits for the local share is that any surplus credits from one project can be transferred to another project. An example of how projects are financed and what costs are involved are shown on Figure 5-1.²⁰ Surplus city credits from other

The data used for this figure was taken from a 1968 Redevelopment Agency report and represents the costs of the project as projected in 1968.

Millions
of dollars

12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

Western Addition
Area A-1 Project



COSTS

PROCEEDS

- SP - Survey and Planning
- LA - Legal and Administrative
- RE - Real Estate Purchases
- CI - Site Clearance and Improvements
- RR - Relocation, Prop. Mgt. & Rehabilitation
- OT - Other
- CG - City Expenditures - Garages
- CO - City Expenditures - Other

- PP - Project Land Proceeds
- FG - Federal Grants
- CS - City Share

Figure 5-1

Western Addition Project Costs

redevelopment projects were used to offset the city's minimum share in the Western Addition A-2 project. This is why the city share (CS) is proportionally much smaller in the A-2 Project than the A-1 project. The Figure 5-1 also shows the importance and magnitude of federal grants.

The Redevelopment Agency plainly states that private economic development is one of the goals of their projects. Commercial projects to raise the tax base of the city are included in redevelopment projects. This is particularly evident in Nihonmachi with the Japar Trade Center, Buchanan Mall, and the Kyoto Inn. Another way to raise property values is to build high density market rate housing units. In the "new" Nihonmachi there are many such complexes. This economic growth allows redevelopment to continue even though there is opposition to redevelopment from different sectors.

The huge amounts of federal funding coming into redevelopment projects also make these programs attractive to City Hall. In addition to traditional urban renewal funding there are other federal and state programs that offer subsidies, in some form, for housing construction or rehabilitation. The Redevelopment Agency promotes and uses many of these programs. One of the most often used program is Section 8 of the U. S. Housing Act of 1937. In this program the federal government pays a rent subsidy of the difference between the rent of the unit and 25% of the family monthly income for dwelling units meeting certain HUD criteria. Establishing a guarantee of Section 8 subsidies also makes it easier to arrange for financing of developments. In the Western Addition many non-profit developers used Section 8 subsidies to build low income housing. Several other federal programs that provided loan guarantees of reduced interest rates also offered developers a chance to build low-to-moderate income housing.

Towards the end of the 1970's new federal programs stressing rehabilitation were offered. In Nihonmachi, partially from pressure from anti-redevelopment groups and partially due to the architecture of the area, the Redevelopment Agency heavily promoted rehabilitation with financing from the State Marks-Foran Residential Rehabilitation Act of 1972.²¹ Local banks committed over \$4,000,000 to buy tax-exempt bonds or notes from the Redevelopment Agency, who in turn, made long term, low interest loans to rehabilitate structures. This program did help some owners rehabilitate their homes, but did not really provide more low-to-moderate housing in Nihonmachi.

The reliance on federal funding does have its drawbacks. For example in 1973, President Nixon announced that there would be stringent national cutbacks in urban renewal programs. This cause the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency to reduce its staff by twenty-five percent and slow down on several of its projects including the Western Addition A-2 project.²²

In 1974, with the passage of the Housing and Community Development Act, federal revenue sharing monies in the form of Community Development Block Grants became available to be used for redevelopment. However these funds were not as large as pre-1973 allocations, so redevelopment was permanently slowed down. Also these federal funds had to be shared with other programs in San Francisco. However, because the Redevelopment Agency has so much political power, and the mayor's

²¹San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Preservation, (San Francisco: 1977), page 3.

²²Hartman, page 191.

office controls these funds, the Redevelopment Agency receives the majority of San Francisco's allocation. These revenue sharing monies make up a large part of the Redevelopment Agency's operating budget.

Problems

By far the most important issue concerning redevelopment is relocation of those displaced by projects. In early projects, such as the A-1 project, the Redevelopment Agency did little to help those who were displaced. As communities organized to protest their rights, the Redevelopment Agency was forced to make some concessions.

In the mid-1960's an organization called the Western Addition Community Organization (WACO), with the help of the San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation, filed a suit against the Redevelopment Agency about their relocation policies in the A-2 project. The suit called for a federal injunction against relocation, demolition, and federal funding in the Western Addition A-2 until valid relocation plan was developed.²³ Both the Redevelopment Agency and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) claimed that the residents of redevelopment areas had no legal rights to challenge inadequacies in relocation plans. However, a federal judge found that several stipulations in the relocation plans had not been satisfied, so the injunction was approved. Less than four months later the Redevelopment Agency filed a slightly revised relocation plan with HUD, which was approved by HUD, and the judge dissolved the injunction.

Although the final effect of this suit was not a major change in Redevelopment Agency policy, it was the first time that the Redevelopment

²³Hartman, page 123.

Agency had been stopped by a project area community organization. This action inspired and set a precedent for other groups to challenge redevelopment on this basis. Lawyers working for community residents in the Yerba Buena Redevelopment project, used the WACO precedent in their legal battles with the Redevelopment Agency.²⁴

Shortly after 1968, when HUD required that all projects which involve residential rehabilitation must include a Project Area Committee in redevelopment planning and execution, the Redevelopment Agency looked for such a group in the Western Addition. Soon WAPAC (the Western Addition Project Area Committee) was formed, made up of 40 diverse groups in the Western Addition and funded by the Redevelopment Agency through project funds.²⁵ The governing board of WAPAC is elected by residents who live in the A-2 project area. Because the Nihonmachi population is so small, Japanese Americans have not had a voice in WAPAC.

The concern about relocation rights and the need for replacement housing became apparent as WAPAC became involved in the redevelopment process. WAPAC's demands for housing for all original inhabitants of the area resulted in a change in the mix of housing originally planned for the area, to an almost totally low to moderate mix from a mix that included market rate housing.²⁶ The result, a high concentration of low income families, was what the Redevelopment Agency was trying to avoid.

²⁴Hartman, Page 124.

²⁵In 1972 WAPAC had a budget of \$150,000.

²⁶San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association, A SPUR Report on the San Francisco Redevelopment Process 1972. (San Francisco, 1972), Appendix 4, page 8.

In an effort to ease community unrest about relocation issues, the Redevelopment Agency started a program to give relocated A-2 residents "Certificates of Preference" to move back into new housing in the A-2 area. Any resident who resided in the A-2 area at any time between October 14, 1964 and July 25, 1967 was eligible to hold a certificate.²⁷ The effectiveness of this program in Nihonmachi was not as great as in the rest of the A-2 area, because the very limited amount of new low-to-moderate income housing did not give many options to certificate holders.

In 1971 federal law, belatedly, was amended to provide increased benefits for those having to relocate due to a redevelopment project. Individuals and families were reimbursed for all moving expenses, or between \$250 - \$500 for a fixed payment and a dislocation allowance. Also the Redevelopment Agency would make up an increase in rent due to relocation up to \$4,000 over a four year period. If a renter were to purchase replacement housing, funding was available to assist in making a down payment up to \$4000. Homeowners seeking to repurchase another home outside the redevelopment area would be eligible for a \$15,000 payment.²⁸

Although these benefits were available to A-2 residents, it was not always easy to get them. These new payments were considered part of the project cost and local government was required to pay one-third of these costs. The Redevelopment Agency, wanting to hold down their

²⁷San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, The New Western Addition is a Good Place to Live. (San Francisco, 1971).

²⁸San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association, page 9.

project costs, did not make these payments easy to receive. Residents often were required to get assistance from community groups or lawyers to get these benefits.

Another problem that was particularly evident in Nihonmachi was rising property values. With large commercial projects such as the Japan Trade Center and new market rate housing, the value of land rose quite sharply. Small landowners were tempted to sell their land and tenants who were not evicted by such actions were faced with increased rents. Soon many long-time Nihonmachi residents found that they could no longer afford to live there.

Somewhat related to the problem of rising land values was the effect of tourism on Nihonmachi. The construction of the Japan Trade Center, Buchanan Mall, and hotels was an obvious attempt by the Redevelopment Agency to turn Nihonmachi into a tourist attraction. Many community residents felt that this was an exploitation of Nihonmachi and of their culture. Rather than rebuilding the Nihonmachi around tourism, they would rather see an improvement in housing for residents and small businesses to serve the community.

All the above mentioned problems address the fundamental question of whether an individual or family has a right to remain in their community and if that community has a right to determine its own destiny.

Community Forces

History

The first recorded Japanese American group to organize around redevelopment in San Francisco was called the Japanese-American Merchants and Property Owners Association. This organization was formed in 1953

to obtain information from the Redevelopment Agency about the planned redevelopment of the Western Addition. The major concern of this organization was the economic effects the designation of the redevelopment area would have on them. They expressed to the Redevelopment Agency that some property owners were having difficulty in obtaining tenants for property in the designated area, and merchants were worried about relocation of their businesses.²⁹

The first formal meeting between high-level Redevelopment Agency staff and members of the Japanese American community occurred on January 29, 1962. Following this meeting an organization called the United Committee for the Japanese Community (UCJC) was formed. On April 24, 1962 this committee published a statement of policy which said in part:

"We feel strongly that it is important toencourage in every way possible all Japanese American businessmen and residents to remain in the area, and even make it possible for others to consider this area for their homes and livelihood. To do this requires an organization supported by all Japanese Americans in San Francisco. Accordingly, we have organized the United Committee for the Japanese Community composed of representatives of all segments of the Japanese American population and their interests."³⁰

Approximately 200 people joined UCJC and over \$4000 was raised to seek the best means of participating in the redevelopment of Nihonmachi. The Redevelopment Agency and UCJC reached an agreement to conduct a survey of community ability and interest to participate in redevelopment, retain consultants to prepare a detailed master plan for redevelopment of a four block area bounded by Post, Webster, Bush, and Laguna

²⁹Tatsuno, page 39.

³⁰Hokubei Mainichi (San Francisco), October 23, 1975.

Streets,³¹ and to explore the most effective financial and organizational means to carry out the redevelopment plan with the Redevelopment Agency.

Two architectural firms, Rai Y. Okamoto and Van Bourg/Nakamura were selected and paid by the Redevelopment Agency. The consultants worked with the UCJC and Redevelopment Agency staff and prepared a preliminary plan which was presented to UCJC in October of 1962. One of the recommendations from the plan was that "A development corporation, built around the UCJC membership with capital drawn from a broad base in and out of the community may offer a solution to the (funding) problem. It is conceivable that the sole purpose of this corporation would be the development of the task (redevelopment)"³²

During the development of this plan, redevelopment continued in the Nihonmachi area that was in the Western Addition Area A-1 project. Businessmen and residents displaced in the A-1 project were given no chance to participate in the planning of the A-1 project and received virtually no relocation benefits. The Redevelopment Agency used the UCJC to quell community resistance to redevelopment. UCJC essentially served as a "mouthpiece for the Redevelopment Agency and was ineffective in protecting the interests of the Japanese American community."³³

On April 8, 1963 UCJC formed a committee to study the feasibility of forming a development corporation. This committee solicited preliminary commitments of interest from UCJC members. Nihonmachi businessmen

³¹This area is outside the Western Addition A-1 project area and in the A-2 area that was under study.

³²San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Nihonmachi, an Urban Design Study in the Western Addition Area 2, (San Francisco: 1963), page 23.

³³Tatsuno, page 34

and property owners saw what happened to their counterparts in the A-1 project area and were quick to express interest in the proposed development corporation. A decision to form a development corporation was reached on May 22, 1963 and formal incorporation happened in early 1964. Later that same year, on October 13, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved the Redevelopment Plan for the Western Addition Area A-2.

NCDC

This new entity was named the Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation (NCDC). It is important to distinguish NCDC from non-profit community development corporations. NCDC is made up of businessmen although most are small businessmen, and profit oriented. NCDC has an authorized capital of 5,000 shares, with an aggregate value of \$500,000 (\$100 per share).³⁴ All landowners and commercial tenants in the designated four-block area³⁵ were invited to participate. To buy into the corporation, one to five shares must be purchased. Excess shares were offered to shareholders of the Corporation without restriction. Each share of stock is entitled to one vote.

A shareholder who is a former landowner in the four-block area was given priority to purchase a site for redevelopment from the Corporation. All redevelopment must conform to a master plan that was developed by the Board of Directors of NCDC and the Redevelopment Agency. Shareholders wanting to redevelop must show financial capability before NCDC would designate them a parcel.

³⁴Tatsuno, page 47

³⁵The area bounded by Post, Webster, Bush, and Laguna Streets

Although the redevelopment plan for the A-2 project was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1964, federal funds were not available until June of 1966 because of the passage of Proposition 14.³⁶ During this period, NCDC and the Redevelopment Agency jointly hired the same consultants, who did the initial Nihonmachi study, to define development parcels and develop precise design criteria for the buildings. The revised Nihonmachi Master Plan was approved on March 18, 1968 and a formal contractual agreement between the Redevelopment Agency and NCDC to sell all sites in the four-block area through NCDC was executed on March 19, 1968. Details for design and development control were approved by the Redevelopment Agency on May 1, 1970 and on July 21, 1970 the first parcel was sold through NCDC, the first construction began in October, 1970.

The name "Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation" invokes a picture of community participation. However, as will be discussed in more detail later, NCDC was not seen as a positive influence by all sectors in Nihonmachi. The Redevelopment Agency, under considerable pressure from groups charging them with disregard for project area communities, used NCDC as an example of community controlled redevelopment. Also by giving control of a relatively small four-block area to NCDC, the Redevelopment Agency was able to placate some of the community in order that the rest of the Nihonmachi community could be redeveloped virtually as the Agency wishes.

The original master plan for the four-block area as shown in the 1963 study was what initial site allocations were based on during the

³⁶A measure intended to preclude anti-discrimination legislation in the sale and rental of housing, and declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on May 10, 1966.

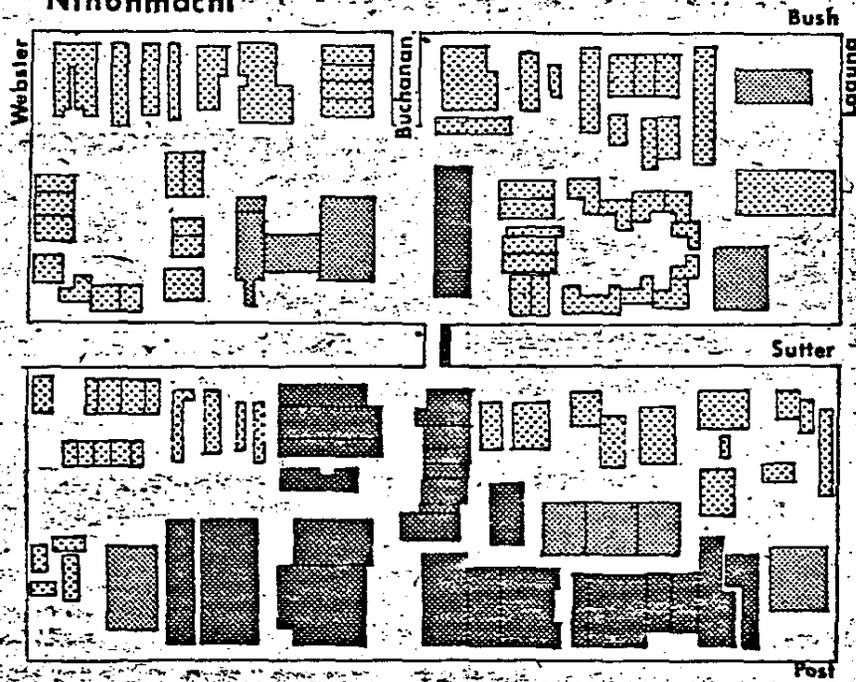
early 1970's. Because NCDC had complete control over the four block area, this master plan could be amended at any time by a vote of the Corporation. Substantial changes did occur over the years as is shown in Figure 5-2. The two maps show that the commercial areas have increased in number and grown in size, while residential areas have become smaller. Also no low rent housing is planned within the four-block area by NCDC.

CANE

In the 1970's NCDC was not the only community organization concerned with redevelopment in Nihonmachi. Seeing a need that wasn't being met by the Redevelopment Agency or NCDC, an organization called the Committee Against Nihonmachi Evictions (CANE) was formed in February of 1973 around concerns about tenant rights. During this time period, redevelopment was at a high level in Nihonmachi. NCDC was actively redeveloping its four-block area and the Redevelopment Agency initiated demolition of many other sites in Nihonmachi. Residents and small businesses were finding it hard to relocate in Nihonmachi and were forced out of the community. Promises of Redevelopment Agency relocation assistance were not being fulfilled.

It was under this kind of environment that CANE was founded. A community dinner in January of 1973 drew approximately 300 people to hear about redevelopment and tenant rights. The first CANE meeting was held in February of 1973 with about 30 people attending. Subsequent meetings in February and March drew up to 100 people as word got out about CANE. Basic questions were brought up around how the Redevelopment Agency works and the rights and responsibilities tenants have. The need for an organization to advocate tenant education and right became

1952
Nihonmachi



1975

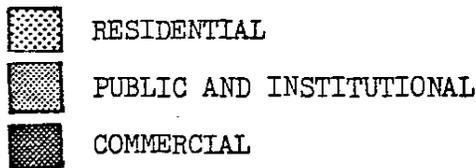
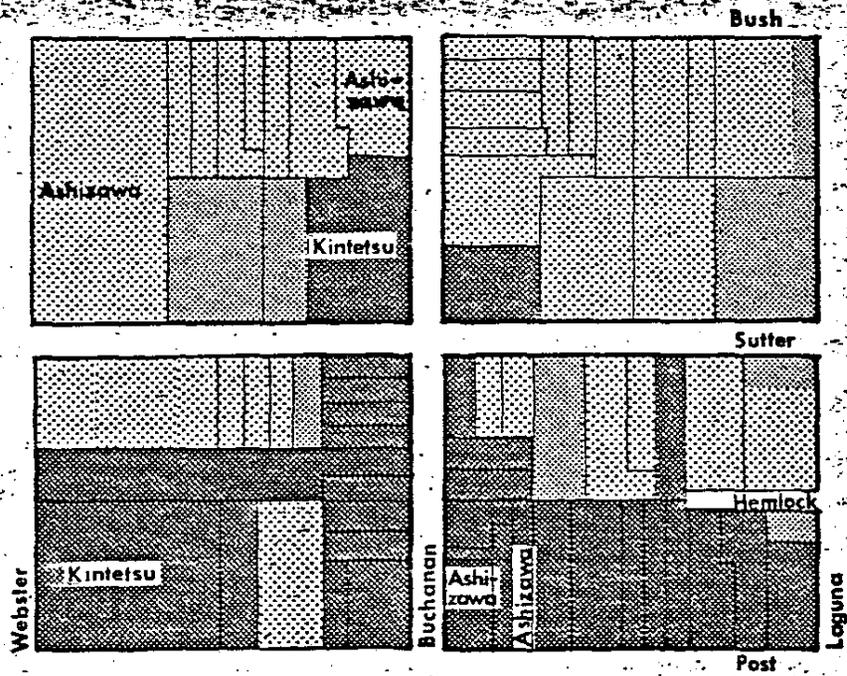


Figure 5-2

Comparison of NCD's Nihonmachi Plan

apparent. With this mandate CANE became active in the redevelopment struggle in Nihonmachi. Its two principles were:³⁷

1. Stop the destruction and dispersal of the Japanese community and keep Nihonmachi a residential and small business area.
2. Uphold the rights of residents and small businesses.

One of CANE's first project was support for the Japanese American Religious Fellowship (JARF) housing project. Of major concern was to speed up "Redevelopment Agency commitment to support the project and to get federal funds secured for the project. Also of importance was the relocation of residents and small businesses who occupied the proposed site. CANE met with JARF and the Redevelopment Agency several times during the Mid-1973 to discuss the project.

Since the Redevelopment Agency was virtually unchallenged in the past about its relocation policies, the Agency was somewhat lax in its procedures for evictions and relocation services. During the Summer of 1973 CANE took matters in its own hands and found sites within Nihonmachi for several tenants about to be evicted from the JARF site. CANE also won an extension of an eviction notice in court when the Redevelopment Agency did not follow proper procedures.

CANE's second major struggle was to oppose the construction of a Kintetsu owned high-rise motel on the corner of Sutter and Buchanan Streets. Since this project was within NCDC jurisdiction, it resulted in CANE's first major confrontation with NCDC. CANE tried to appeal the demolition permit for the site, but lost and the motel was built.

³⁷Committee Against Nihonmachi Evictions, CANE Newsletter, February-March, 1974. page 2.

As a grass-roots, community based organization, CANE suffered from the usual problems that plague these types of groups. Relative inexperience about dealing with a well established governmental body such as the Redevelopment Agency and the huge task of educating and organizing a community hindered CANE's efforts to counter the Redevelopment Agency and NCDC. However, CANE's membership grew in numbers and they became a force that the Redevelopment Agency and NCDC had to recognize.

By mid 1974 CANE's membership was over 200 individuals,³⁸ and by 1975 membership was over 300.³⁹ CANE was portrayed by the Redevelopment Agency, NCDC, and the local press as "young, misguided, radicals," but CANE reports that in 1975, two-thirds of its 300 members are over the age of 36.⁴⁰ Also the CANE coordinating committee at that time consisted of about half "older" and half "younger" members. However, it is true that young community activists played a leading role in CANE.

In mid 1974 CANE suffered from internal problems about the direction of their past work. This was building within CANE since earlier in the year and caused CANE to focus its energy inwards, rather than out to the community. CANE suffered from lack of direction and their community work declined. Towards the end of the year, CANE reassessed their past work and reorganized. Their new direction was broader than their past scope of work. The new focus was the "master plan" for Nihonmachi, and Kintetsu and the Redevelopment Agency were

³⁸Committee Against Nihonmachi Evictions, One Year of Struggle, (San Francisco, 1974), page 1.

³⁹Hokubei Mainichi (San Francisco), July 9, 1975.

⁴⁰ibid.

just a part of the "master plan". With the internal problem addressed, CANE was able to continue their work in the community.

In July of 1974 CANE went to the biennial convention of the Japanese American Citizen League (JACL) in Portland, Oregon to get support for their efforts in Nihonmachi. JACL has a membership of about 25,000 nationwide. Some NCDC members, local Japanese press, and the San Francisco Chapter of the JACL were skeptical that CANE would even be heard at the convention, but the delegates upheld, by a 68 to 3 vote, CANE's two principles of unity and pledged resources to aide CANE's work. This victory raised CANE's confidence, but the victory turned out to be a paper one when the JACL National Headquarters which is based in Nihonmachi refused to allow CANE use of the resources promised at the Portland convention. It appears that it was not politically popular for JACL to be supportive of CANE in San Francisco.

During 1974 and 1975 CANE continued its attack on redevelopment. CANE found that the Redevelopment Agency and City Hall could not be beat with the limited resources of CANE. Small victories such as extensions of eviction notices and concessions from the Redevelopment Agency to temporarily repair buildings occurred, but redevelopment continued on other sites in Nihonmachi. CANE's tactics of attending Redevelopment Agency Commission meetings and protests at Redevelopment Agency offices brought attention to the problems in Nihonmachi and were successful to the extent that the Agency was sometimes forced to make some small concessions.

During 1975 internal problems again arose in CANE about the direction of the organization. One of the forces involved was an organization called the Japantown Collective. The Japantown Collective

was a progressive community based group that was concerned with a broad range of issues, including redevelopment. Being one of the founding groups of CANE, many Japantown Collective members were also members of CANE, some serving in high leadership positions including the office of president. CANE records do not detail the conflicts that occurred during that time, but the main differences were about how CANE should carry out its anti-redevelopment work.

Towards the end of 1975 Japantown Collective members withdrew from CANE. This occurred quite abruptly and followed five months without a CANE general meeting and a slippage in CANE's work in the community. The withdrawal of these active members further hampered CANE's community work and hurt its reputation in the community. The once close relationship between CANE and the Japantown Collective became one of distrust.

CANE reorganized in the beginning of 1976 to continue their work in Nihonmachi. Elections were held and the CANE constitution was amended to restructure CANE and make the organization better able to carry out its work. The main focus of work was designated to be helping tenants around Sutter and Laguna Streets.

After this reorganization, CANE's work continued essentially as before, being involved in struggles around individual sites and making appearances before the Redevelopment Agency and the courts, continuing to sometimes win small, but individually important concessions from the Redevelopment Agency. In ensuing years CANE's membership declined as the Nihonmachi community grew smaller. The very force CANE was fighting had the power to whittle away at CANE's membership.

During November of 1977, CANE was able to arrange a meeting with Mayor Moscone to discuss redevelopment in Nihonmachi and

specifically about problems with tenants in the Sutter and Laguna Street area. While approximately 250 people demonstrated outside City Hall, twelve representatives, including some Sutter/Laguna tenants met with the mayor. Mayor Moscone was supposed to have a plan to deal with the Sutter/Laguna problem, however he avoided the issue by saying that because it was in a designated redevelopment area, he could not do anything about it. The representatives presented the mayor with some demands about the Sutter/Laguna issue. When Mayor Moscone refused to discuss the matter, eight of the representatives refused to leave, resulting in their arrest. The charges were subsequently dropped and the Sutter/Laguna issue has still not been totally resolved to this date.

Through 1976 and 1977 CANE became increasingly involved in other issues in addition to redevelopment in Nihonmachi such as the Bakke decision, education about China, and the International Hotel Struggle. This eventually lead to a change in CANE's principles in 1978 to:⁴¹

1. Stop the destruction and dispersal of the Japanese Community.
2. Fight in the interests of Japanese people against inequality and discrimination.
3. Support the struggles of third world and working people.

In March of 1980 CANE changed its name to the Japanese Community Progressive Alliance (JCPA). This change reflected the decline in redevelopment/evictions work as the redevelopment process in Nihonmachi wound down. Presently JCPA is involved in general community organizing and is active in these main areas: English classes for Japanese

⁴¹Committee Against Nihonmachi Evictions, CANE Newsletter, February-March, 1970, page 2

immigrants, redress/reparations for Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II, and monitoring the remaining redevelopment activities in Nihonmachi.

Early in 1980 JCPA initiated the formation of a non-profit community development corporation to develop low-income housing in Nihonmachi. Response from the Japanese community was positive and a board of directors was formed consisting of a broad range of prominent members of the Japanese community in San Francisco, including some JCPA members. The non-profit corporation was named the Japanese Community United for Housing (JCUH).

JCUH has been dealing directly with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency to develop a site in Nihonmachi for their first project. Responses from the Redevelopment Agency have been positive, but lack of funding sources may become a problem for JCUH.

Interaction

The interaction of the three active forces involved in redevelopment in Nihonmachi, CANE, NCDC, and the Redevelopment Agency, provides for additional insights into the workings of the three groups. The relationship between CANE and the Redevelopment Agency is quite apparent. The relationship between NCDC and the Redevelopment Agency and the relationship between NCDC and CANE are more subtle.

In cooperating with the Redevelopment Agency, NCDC was given control over a four-block area in the heart of Nihonmachi. The interests of most of NCDC members could be served within this relatively small area, but the broader interests of the whole Nihonmachi community, especially about housing, could not be served. The Redevelopment Agency used NCDC as an example of community participation in the redevelopment

process.⁴² Also the Redevelopment Agency claimed that NCDC provides "a view which is representative of the majority of the community."⁴³

The original intention of NCDC was to develop the four-block area according to a plan (see Figure 5-2) where small parcels were available to NCDC members. As redevelopment continued, the master plan for Nihonmachi changed as shown in Figure 5-2. Kintetsu, though a member of NCDC, through their close relationship with the Redevelopment Agency from the A-1 project, was able to secure large parcels of land from NCDC. There is some evidence that some NCDC members opposed Kintetsu's large presence in the four-block area and some of the Redevelopment Agency's actions in Nihonmachi,⁴⁴ but on record NCDC supported Kintetsu.

CANE's relationship with NCDC was tenuous during the early years of CANE's existence. Early CANE records show that attempts to try and get support for CANE from some NCDC members were not successful. The fact that most NCDC members and CANE members came from the same community did not overcome the economic interests of NCDC. Soon this relationship became confrontive as CANE and NCDC clashed over who represented the interests of the community. In March of 1974 NCDC joined with the Nihonmachi Parking Corporation, Nihonmachi Merchants Association, and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California to criticize CANE through a joint press statement in a Japanese American newspaper.⁴⁵

⁴²San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Nihonmachi Community, (San Francisco), pp. 1-2

⁴³Letter from Arthur F. Evans, Executive Director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency to Congresswoman Patsy Mink, October 23, 1975.

⁴⁴Notes compiled from several interviews of NCDC members by others.

⁴⁵Hokubei Mainichi (San Francisco), March 10, 1974.

At various public hearings, NCDC members would claim that CANE did not represent the sentiments of the community. CANE would counter these actions by showing the diversity of their membership and by having older, established Nihommachi residents testify on their behalf.

All three parties had some overlap with another party, CANE and NCDC had their origin in the same community. NCDC and the Redevelopment Agency had the common interest of commercial development. However, it was the Redevelopment Agency who was the most powerful and always in control.

Demographic Changes

Statistics and visual inspections show that Nihommachi has grown smaller in land area and the Japanese population has fluctuated since redevelopment started in the community. Maps 5-1 to 5-14 (located at the end of this chapter) show the geographical change in the community. Nihommachi, as a geographical entity, is assumed to be the area where at least 20% of the housing units on a length of street (between cross streets), are occupied by people with Japanese surnames. These areas are outlined in green on the maps. The percentage of Japanese occupied units are represented by the colored dots (i.e. five dots mean 50%), Black dots mean that there are less than ten residential units.

These maps show that in 1955 the area defined as Nihommachi was equivalent to 13.25 square blocks. In 1980 this area has been reduced to 9.00 square blocks with a low of 7.25 square blocks in 1973. Table 5-2 and Figure 5-3 show this decline graphically. The major change came approximately in 1959 when site clearance started for the construction of the Japan Trade Center and the rest of the Western Addition A-1

Table 5-2
Geographical Area of Nihonmachi^a
(blocks)

Year	Area
1953	13.00
1955	13.25
1957	12.50
1959	11.25
1961	10.00
1963	10.00
1965	8.25
1967	9.00
1969	8.50
1971	8.50
1973	7.25
1975	8.50
1977	8.25
1980	9.00

^aDefined as at least 20% of the housing units on a length of street (between cross streets) are occupied by people with Japanese surnames.

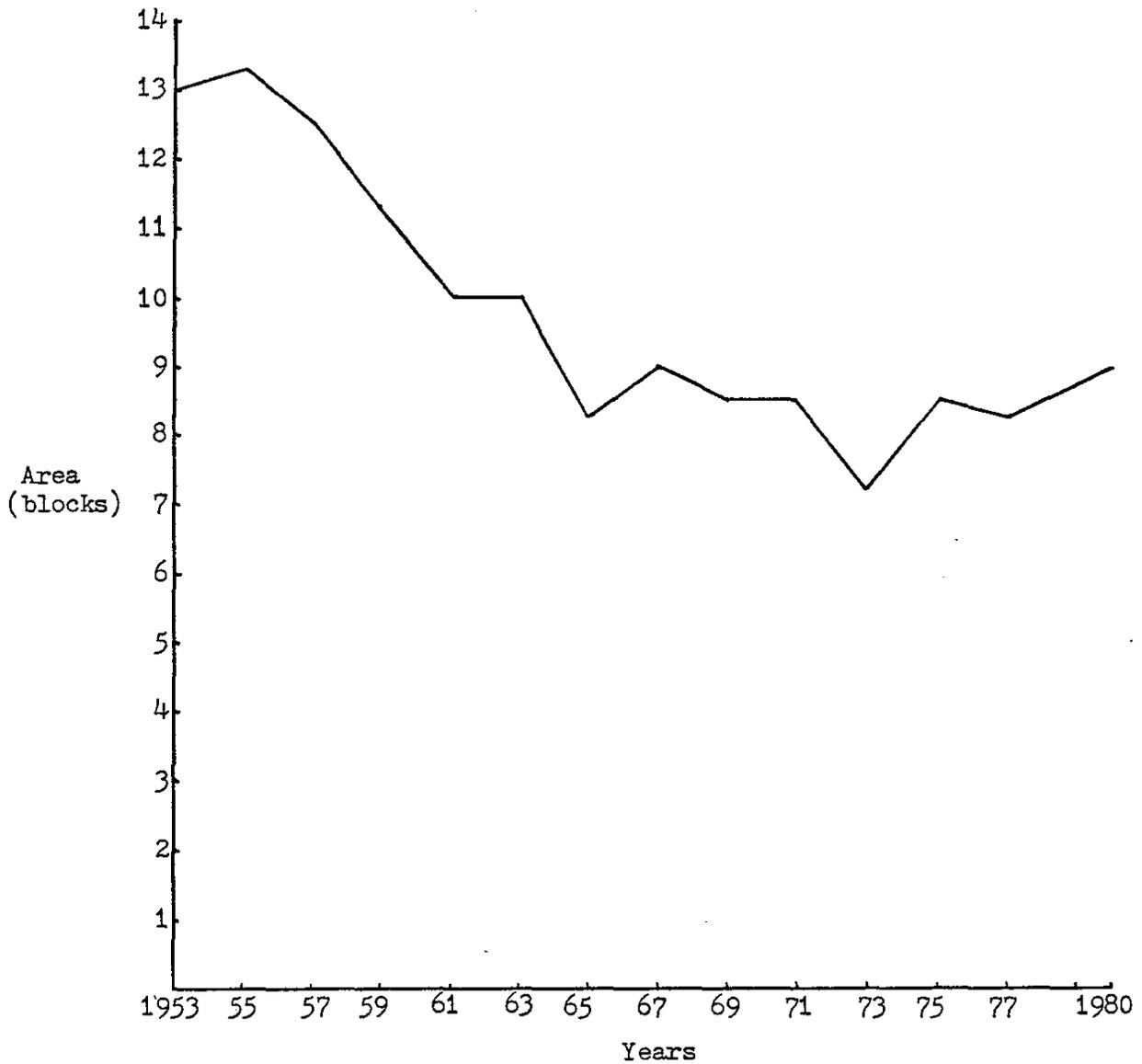


Figure 5-3

Geographical Area of Nihonmachi^a

^aDefined as at least 20% of the housing units on a length of street (between cross streets) are occupied by people with Japanese surnames.

project in the Nihonmachi area. The increase in 1975 was due to the construction of the 244 unit Japanese American Religious Federation (JARF) project.

The amount of residential units within the Nihonmachi area, as defined above, followed the geographical reduction in area. This is shown in Table 5-3 and Figure 5-4. Again, a rather abrupt change came in 1959 with the construction of the Japan Trade Center and other A-1 projects, and an increase in 1975 with the construction of the JARF project. The increase from 1975 to 1980 represents an increase in new apartment complexes in Nihonmachi. This increase in multiple unit structures results in an increase in density measured in residential units per block. Table 5-4 and Figure 5-5 show the changes in residential unit density over the study period.

It was found that there were three zones that could be identified in the study area. First, the inner zones that was defined as Nihonmachi and is bordered by green in the maps, secondly a "fringe" area where a low percentage (less than 15%, but usually less than 5%) of Japanese surnamed occupants were found, and lastly the area beyond the fringe where virtually no Japanese surnamed occupants were found. This pattern was evident throughout the study period.

In the inner area defined as Nihonmachi, approximately 33%⁴⁶ of the residential units are occupied by Japanese surnamed people. Of the total units occupied by Japanese surnamed people (the total of the fringe and inner area) 19%⁴⁷ of the units are located in the fringe area,

⁴⁶Average of 14 values taken from 1953-1980, see Table 5-3.

⁴⁷Average of 14 values taken from 1953-1980, see Table 5-4.

Table 5-3

Residential Units in Nihonmachi

Year	Residential Units
1953	1091
1955	1388
1957	1264
1959	977
1961	858
1963	900
1965	854
1967	822
1969	894
1971	889
1973	721
1975	975
1977	1247
1980	1255

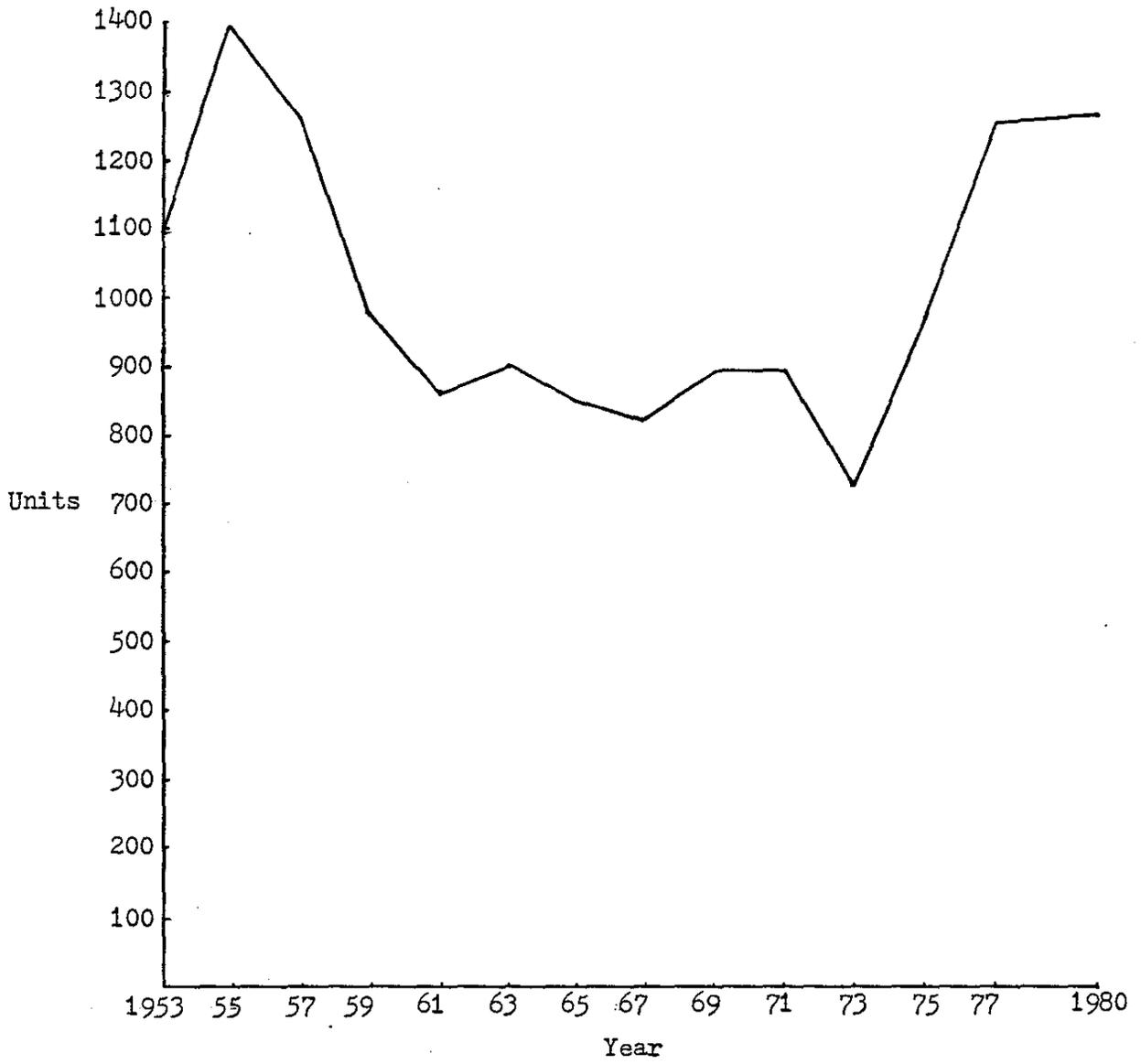


Figure 5-4

Residential Units in Nihonmachi

Table 5-4

Residential Unit Density in Nihonmachi
(residential units/block)

Year	Density
1953	83.9
1955	104.8
1957	101.1
1959	86.8
1961	85.8
1963	90.0
1965	103.5
1967	91.3
1969	105.2
1971	104.6
1973	99.4
1975	114.7
1977	150.4
1980	138.8

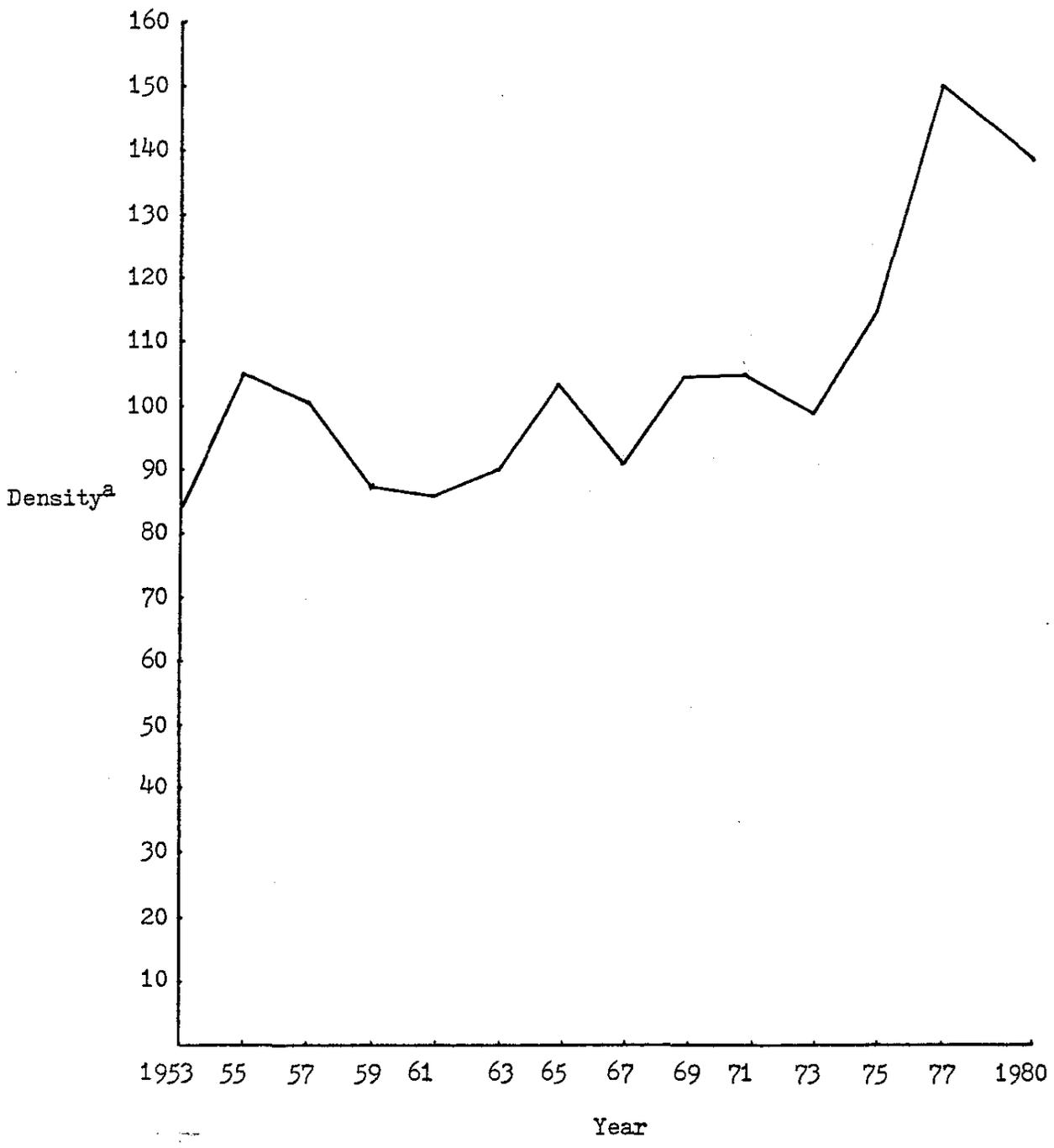


Figure 5-5

Residential Unit Density in Nihonmachi

^aMeasured in residential units per block.

leaving 80% of the units in the area defined as Nihonmachi. Table 5-5 and Figures 5-6 show the changes in the residential units occupied by Japanese surnamed people in the area defined as Nihonmachi. Table 5-6 and Figure 5-7 shows breakdown of the total Japanese surnamed people in both the fringe area and the area defined as Nihonmachi.

The effects of the A-1 project in the Nihonmachi area, including the Japan Trade Center is shown in Figure 5-8. The map shows the Nihonmachi area, as it was in 1953, in green and the red area shows specific projects of the A-1 project as they are today. This massive change in the southern part of Nihonmachi severely reduced the Japanese population in this area and only Saint Francis Square has a significant number of Japanese residents in it.

Census data confirm the data presented in the Tables and Figures. Table 5-7 shows census data for a tract bounded by Sutter, Steiner, California, and Gough Streets. This tract is the one that best represents the Nihonmachi area.⁴⁸ Data for 1980 was not available at this time.

The Table shows that between 1940 and 1950 a major growth in population occurred. As was presented earlier in this chapter, this growth was spurred by war industries. The decline in population after 1950 would be unusual if this was not a redevelopment area. One would expect a growth between 1960 and 1970, yet there is a distinct decline because of redevelopment activity started in this area in the late 1960's. The 1980 census data should show a significant increase as is shown in the previous Tables and Figures. Dwelling unit counts also show a similar

⁴⁸Other adjacent census tracts include only portions of the Nihonmachi community. This tract approximates the northern part of Nihonmachi.

Table 5-5

Residential Units Occupied by Japanese
Surnamed People in Nihonmachi

Year	Residential Units
1953	331
1955	395
1957	392
1959	331
1961	344
1963	349
1965	298
1967	297
1969	313
1971	296
1973	248
1975	291
1977	384
1980	407

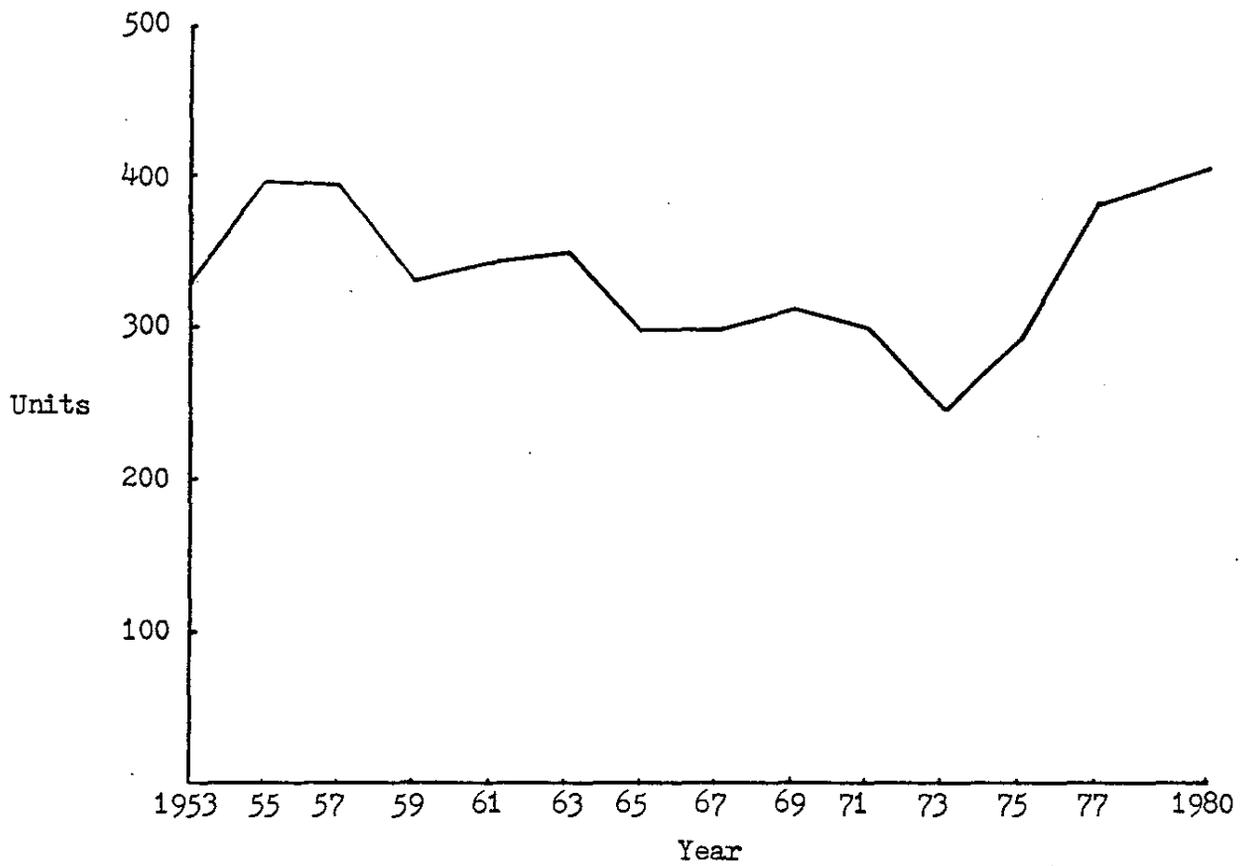


Figure 5-6

Residential Units Occupied by Japanese
Surnamed People in Nihonmachi

Table 5-6

Total Residential Units Occupied by Japanese Surnamed People

Year	Units in Nihonmachi	Units in Fringe Area	Total Units
1953	331	78	409
1955	395	79	474
1957	392	134	526
1959	331	109	440
1961	344	55	398
1963	349	51	400
1965	298	76	374
1967	297	66	363
1969	313	69	382
1971	296	70	366
1973	248	61	309
1975	291	78	369
1977	384	88	472
1980	407	99	506

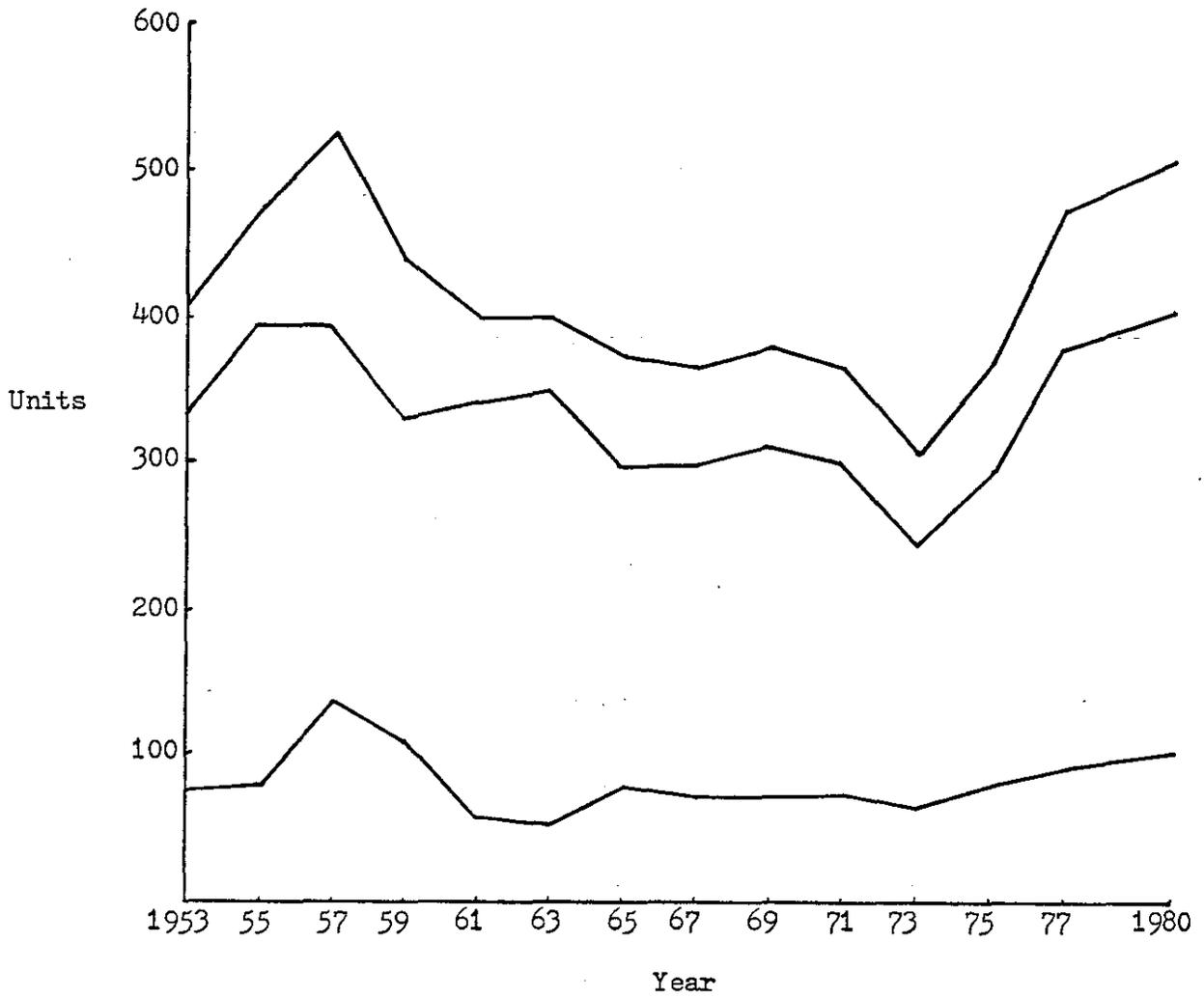


Figure 5-7

Total Residential Units Occupied by Japanese Surnamed People

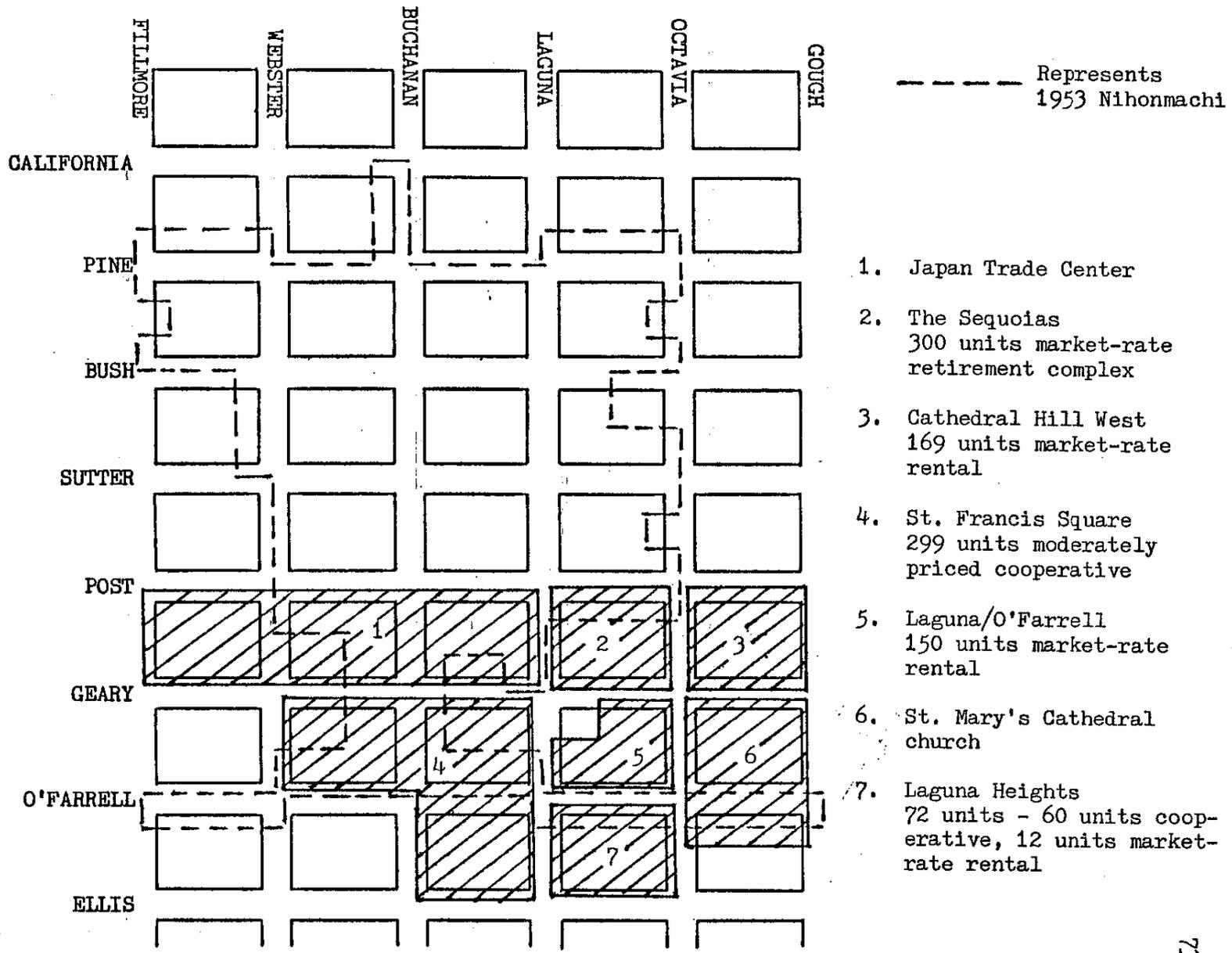


Figure 5-8

Effects of the Western Addition A-2 Project on Nihonmachi

Table 5-7
Census Data^a

	1940	1950	1960	1970
Population	2,493	6,137	5,131	3,851
Dwelling Units	b	2,075	2,205	1,921
Occupants per Dwelling Unit	b	3.0	2.3	2.0

^aCensus tract bordered by Sutter, Steiner, California, and Gough Streets.

^bData not available for 1940.

decline between 1960 and 1970. The number of occupants per unit also shows a steady decline from a high of 3.0 in 1950 to 2.0 in 1970, which can be interpreted as fewer families living in the area.

There are only three housing complexes in the Nihonmachi area that have rent subsidies and can be classified as low-income housing. All three have long waiting lists and are shown in Table 5-8. Only the Golden Gate Apartments are family units, the JARF and Sakura apartments are for elderly and disabled people. All three get rent subsidies through HUD Section 8 funds. Also, being located in Nihonmachi does not mean that these subsidized housing units are all occupied by Japanese people. Federal guidelines prohibit any kind of discrimination in tenant selection. Table 5-9 shows some current market rate rents in the Nihonmachi area.

Table 5-8

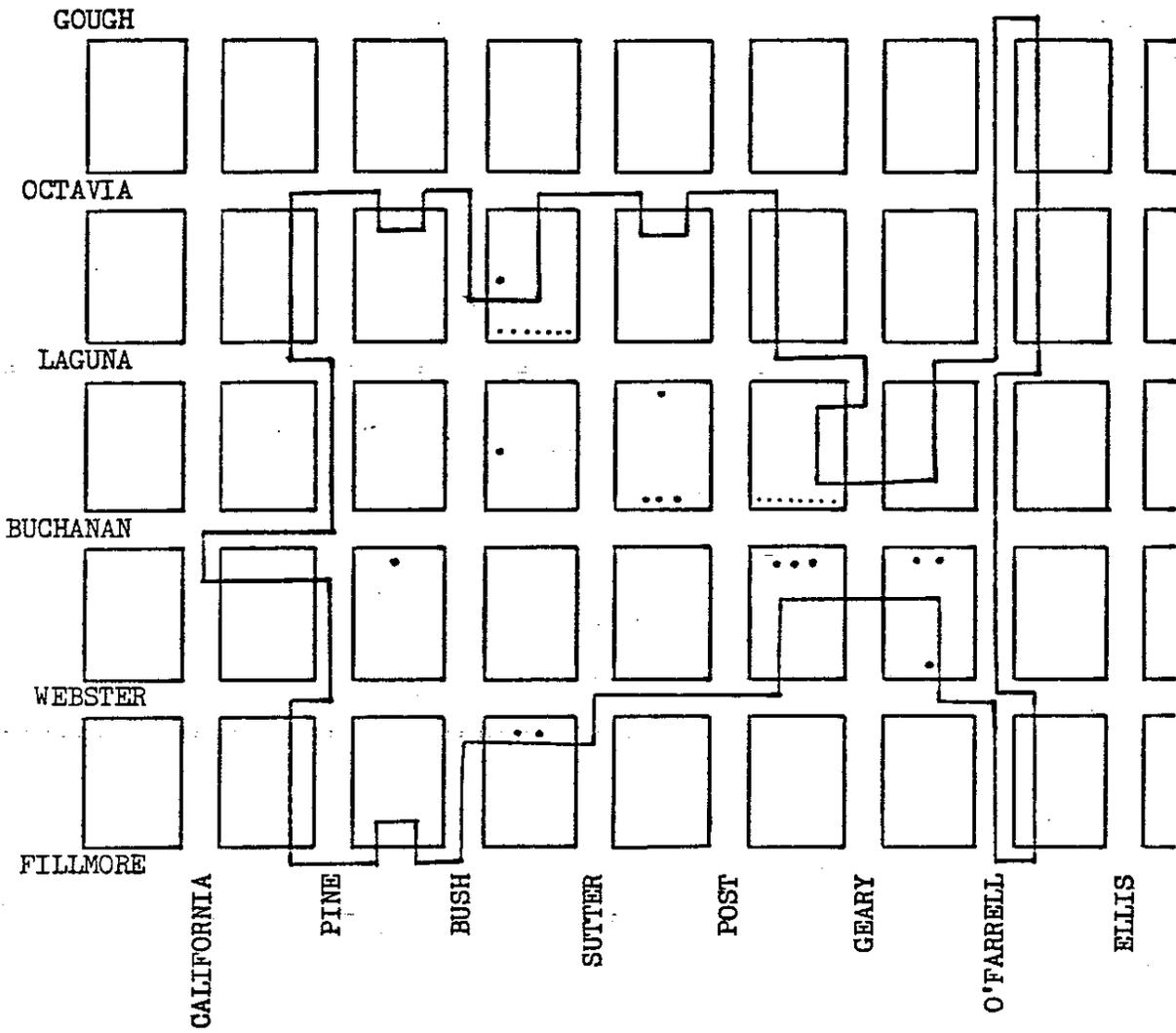
Subsidized Housing in the Nihonmachi Area

Japanese American Religious Federation 1629 Sutter Street	82 units
Namiki 1776 Sutter Street	27 units
Golden Gate 1820 Post Street	72 units

Table 5-9
Samples of Market Rate Rents
in the Nihonmachi Area^a

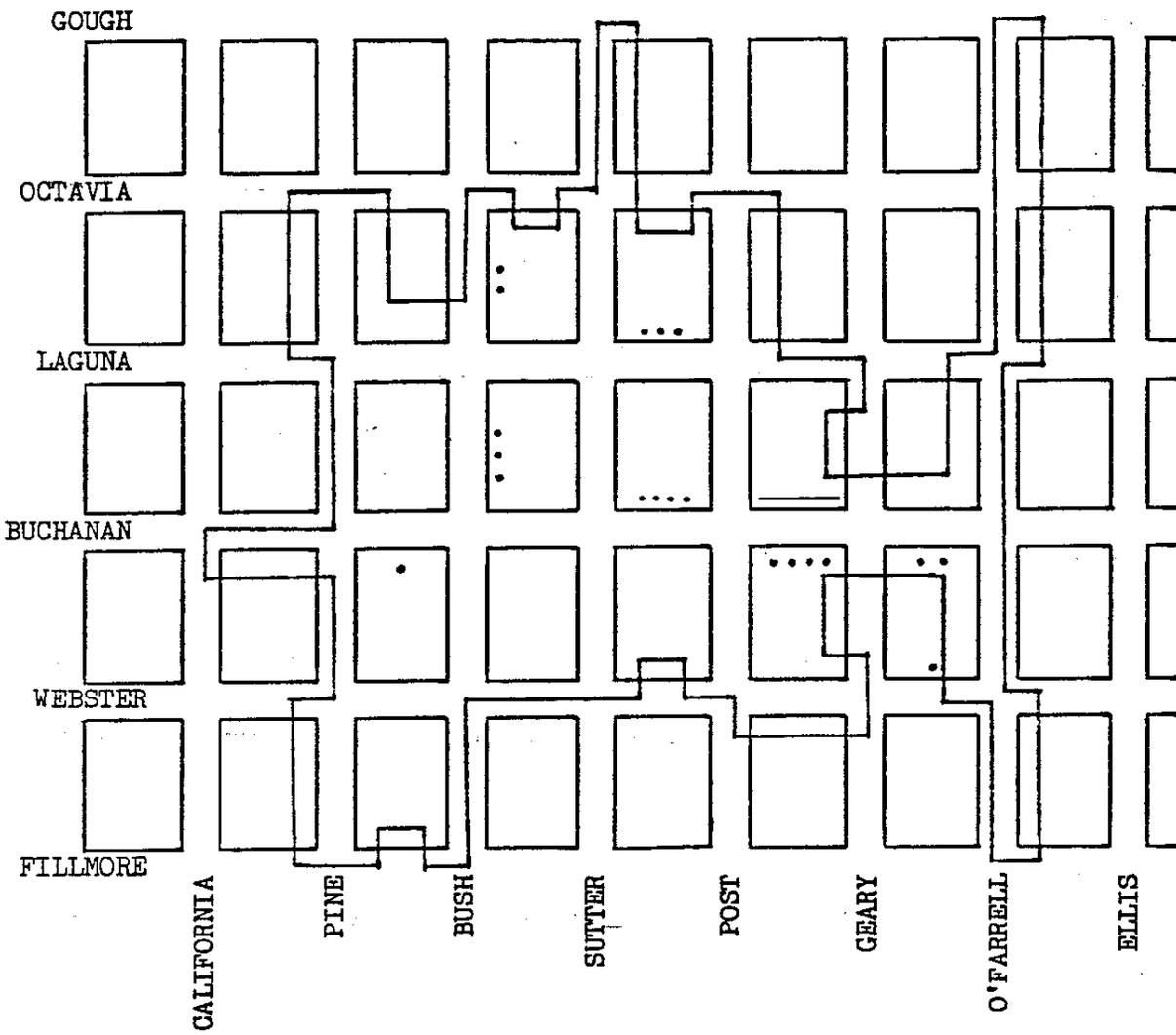
Location	Number of Units	Rent
1911 Bush Street	24	\$315 1 Bedroom
1865 Bush Street	18	390 2 Bedroom
1915 Bush Street	8	325 1 Bedroom
1701 Bush Street	8	400 2 Bedroom
1505 Gough Street	23	350 1 Bedroom
1630 Sutter Street	19	395 1 Bedroom

^aSamples taken January 1980.



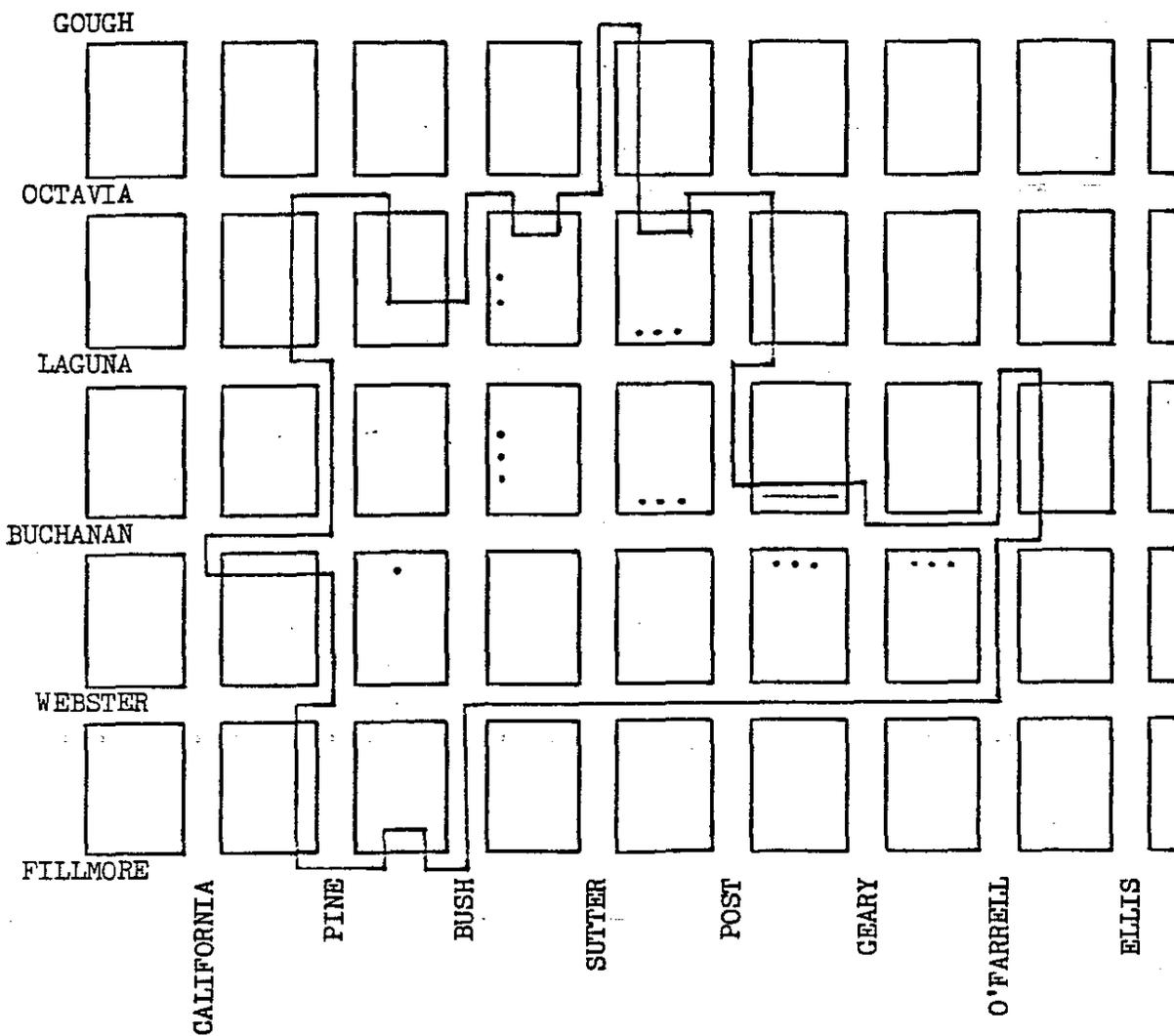
Map 5-1

Nihonmachi 1953



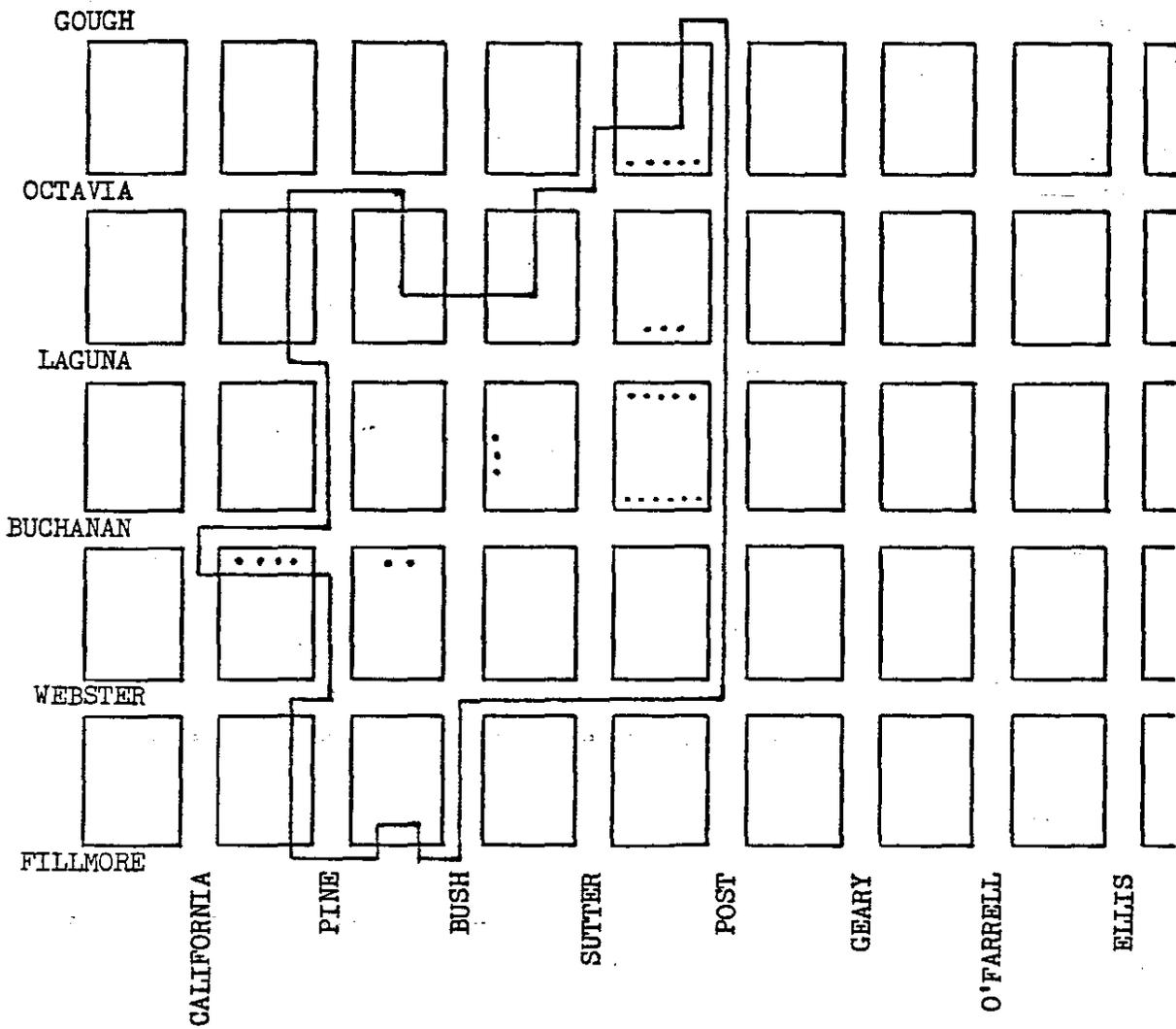
Map 5-2

Nihonmachi 1955



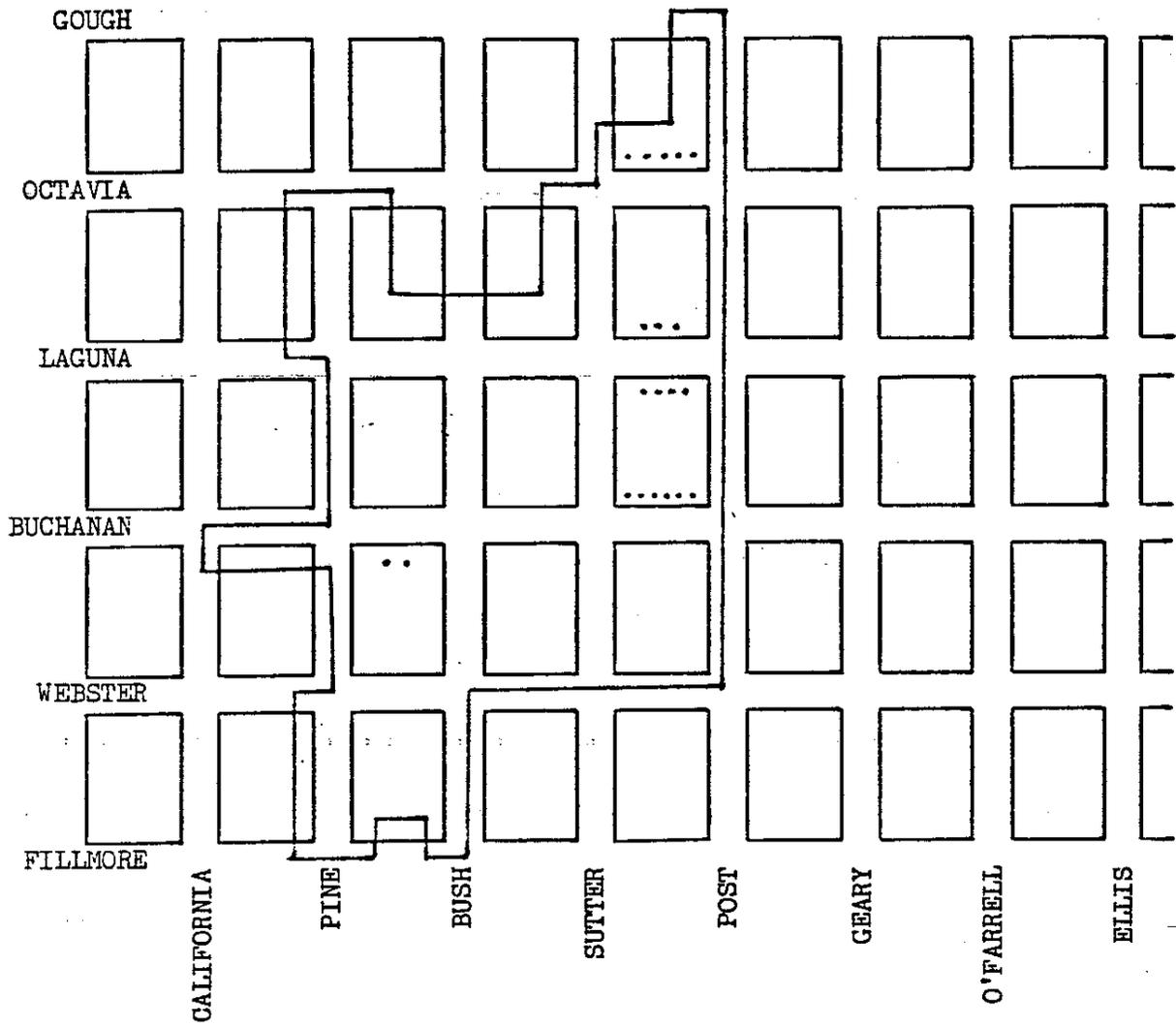
Map 5-3

Nihonmachi 1957



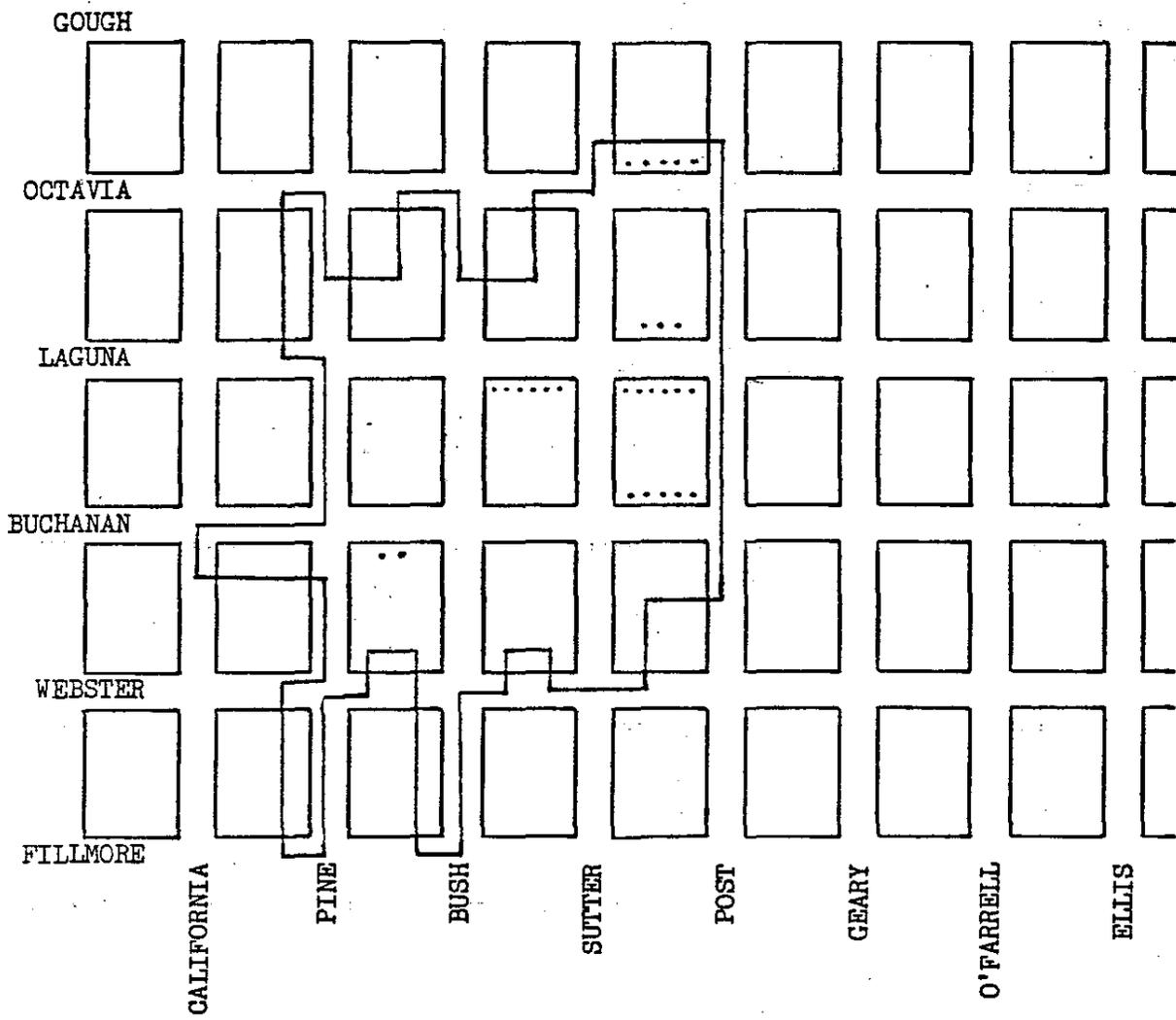
Map 5-5

Nihonmachi 1961



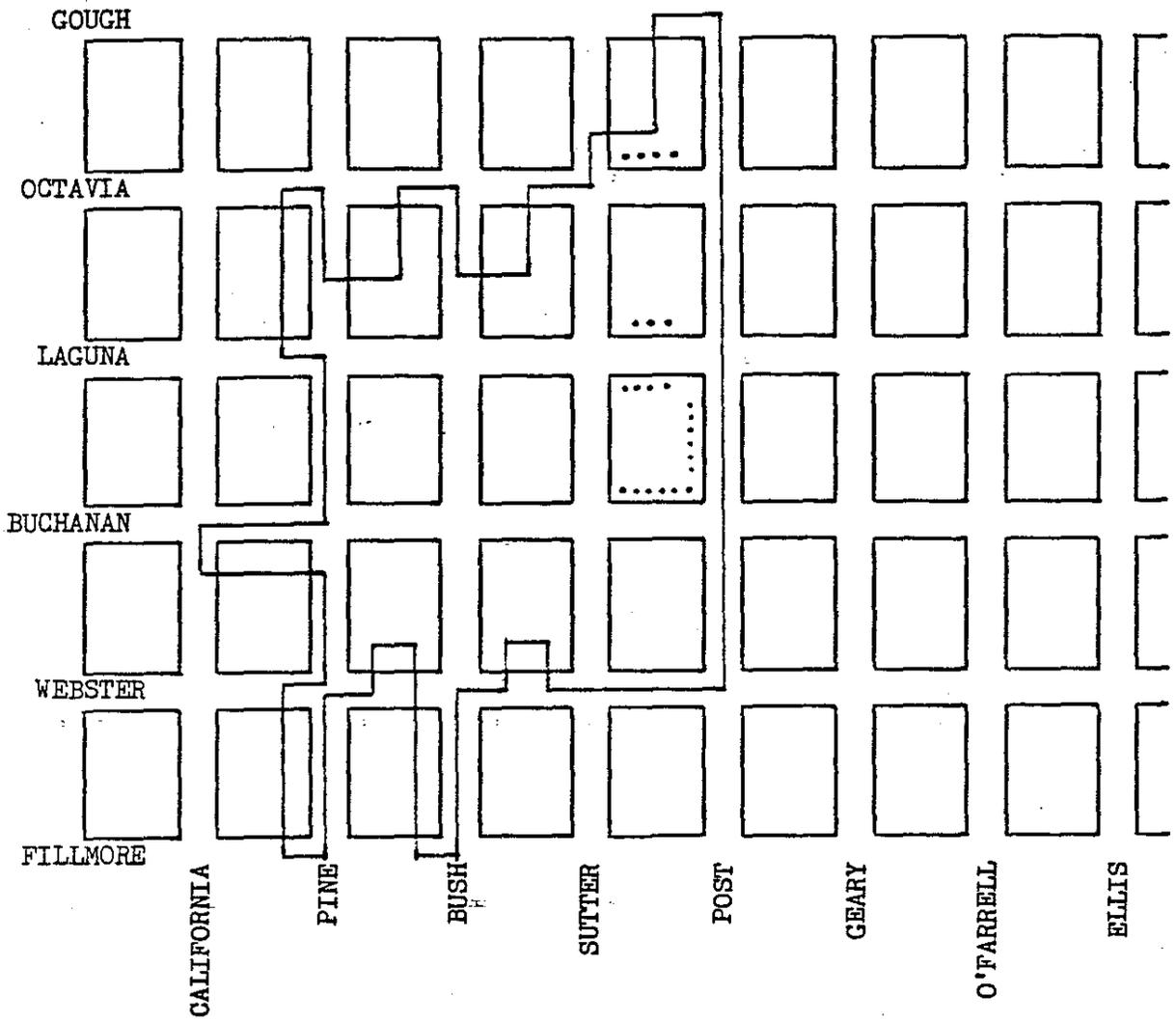
Map 5-6

Nihonmachi 1963



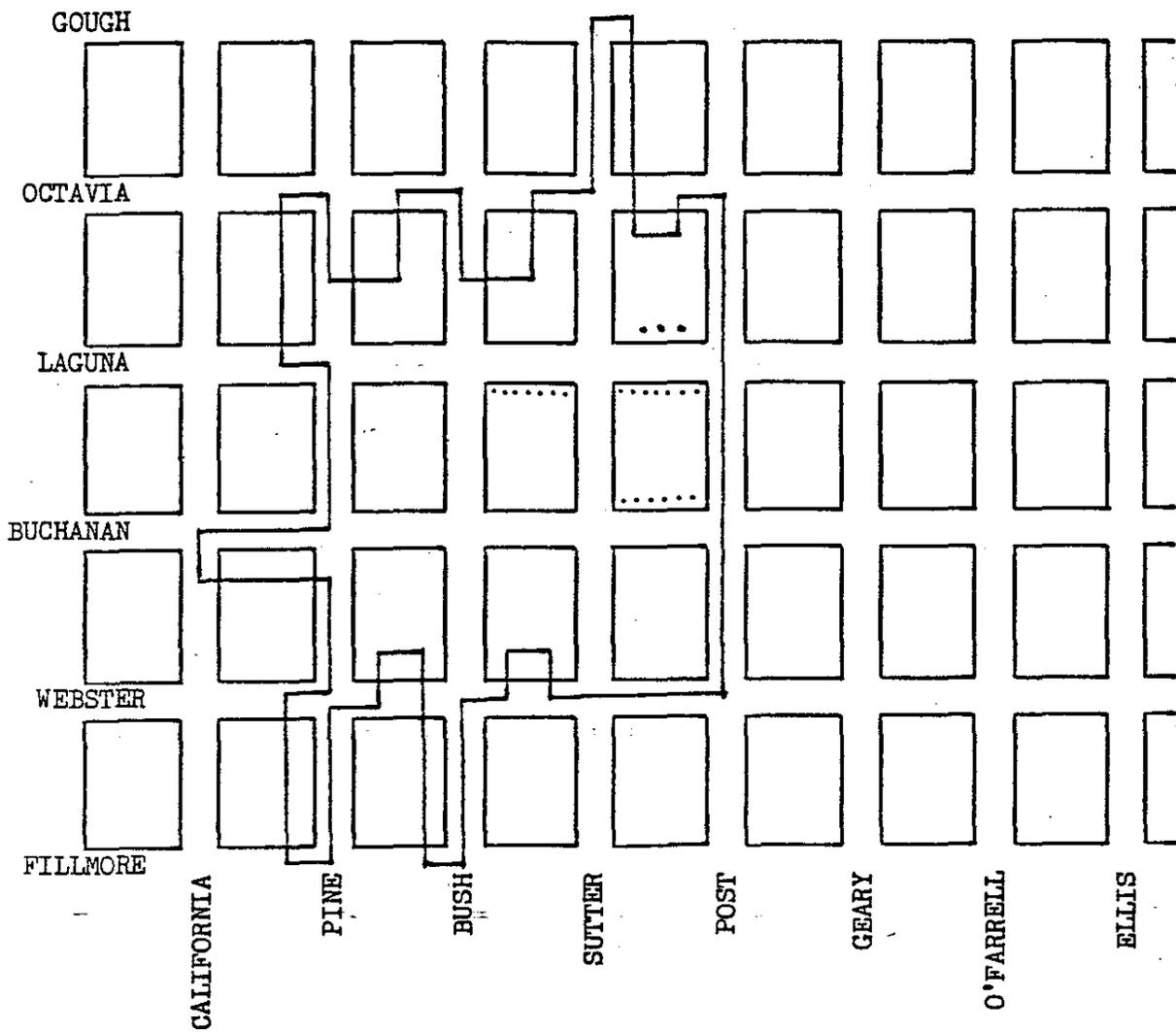
Map 5-7

Nihonmachi 1965



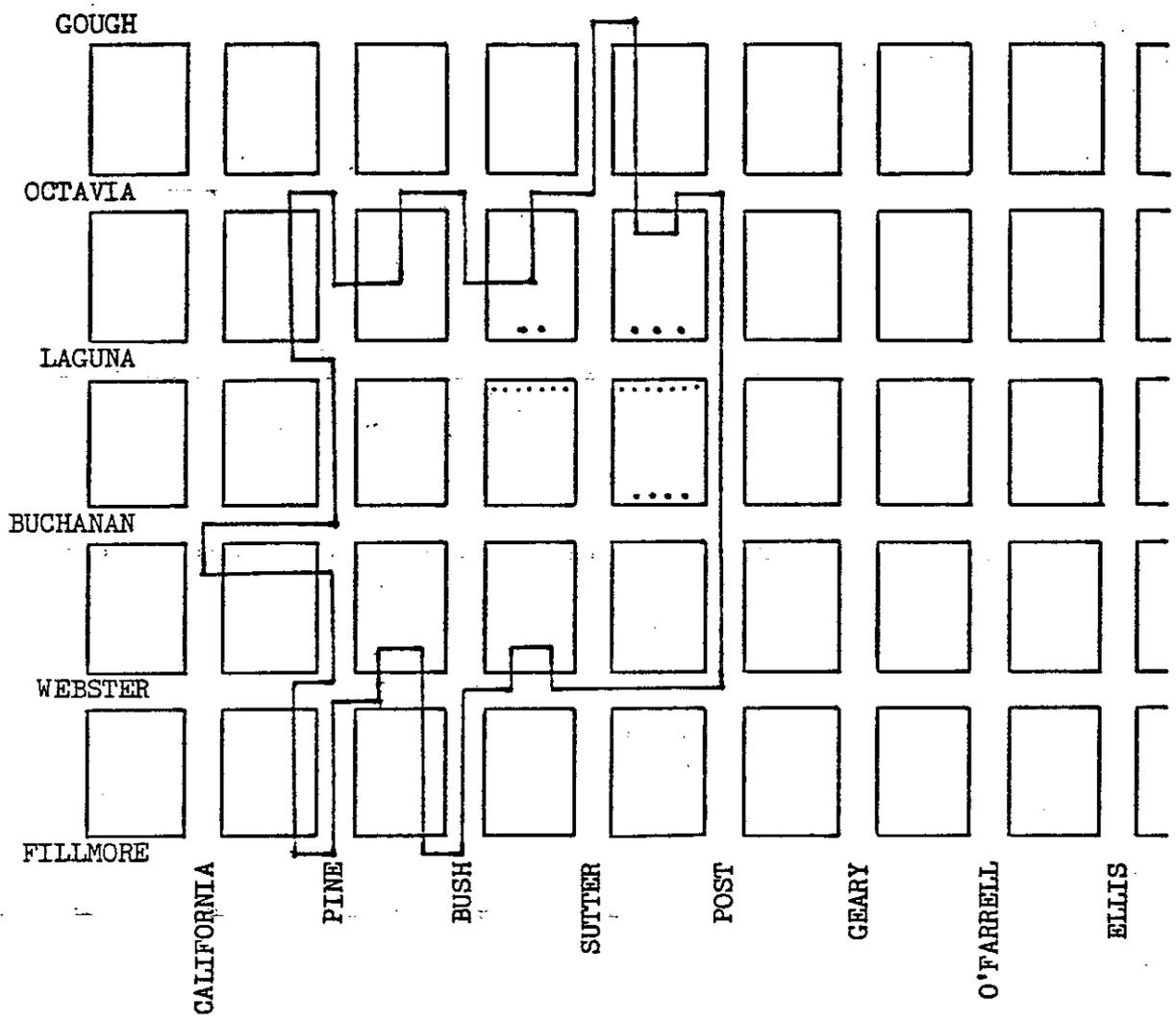
Map 5-8

Nihonmachi 1967



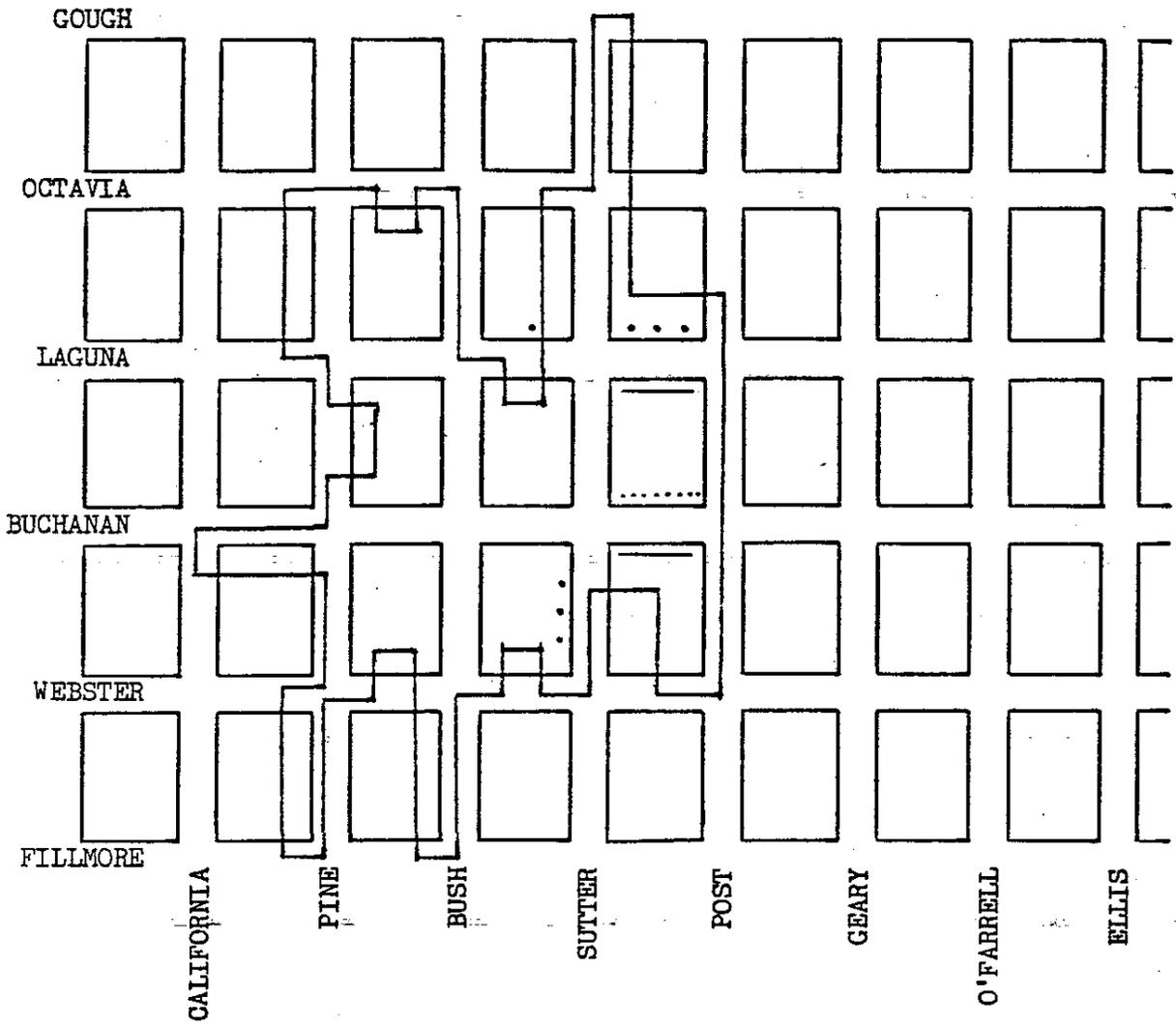
Map 5-9

Nihonmachi 1969



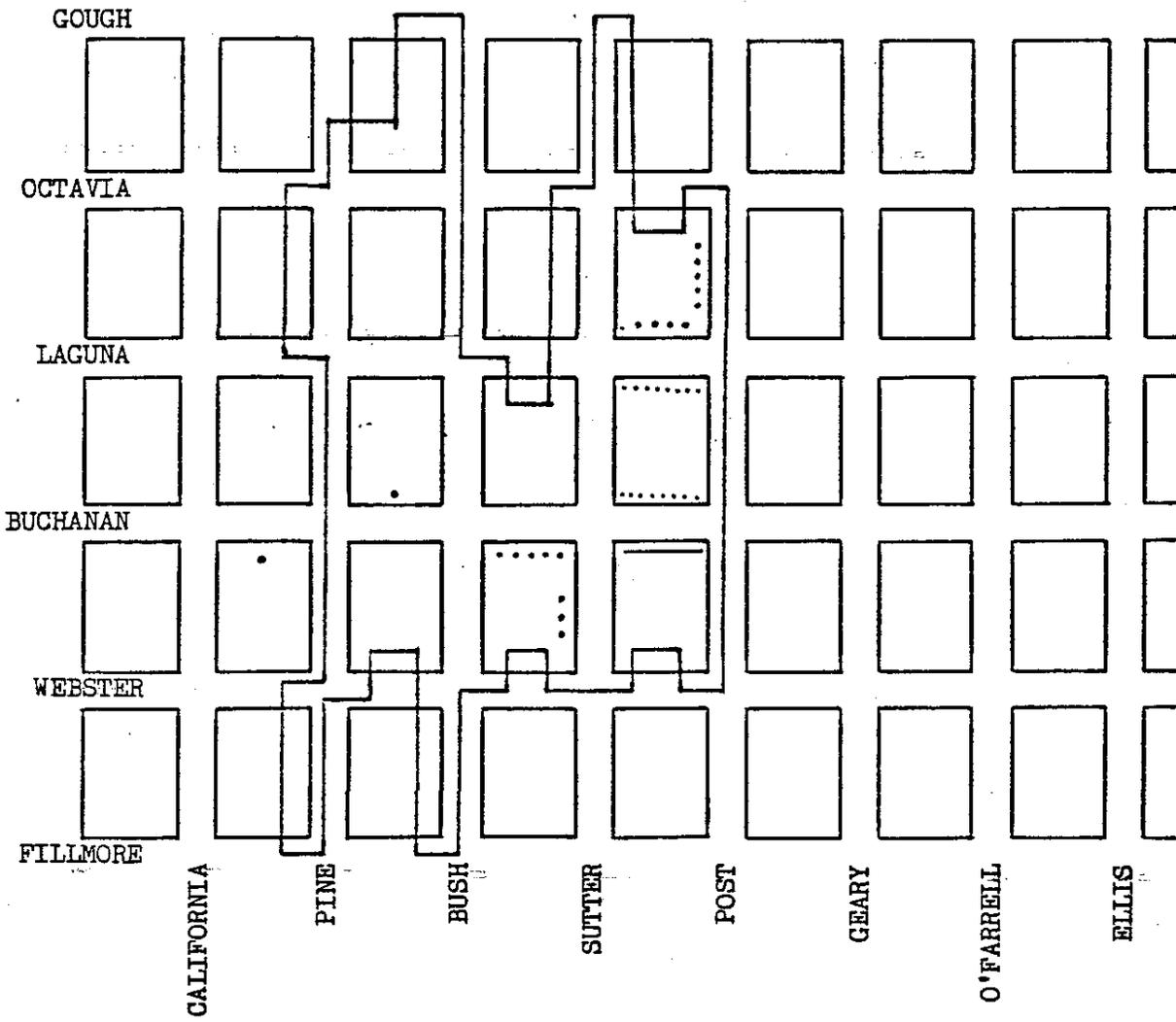
Map 5-10

Nihonmachi 1971



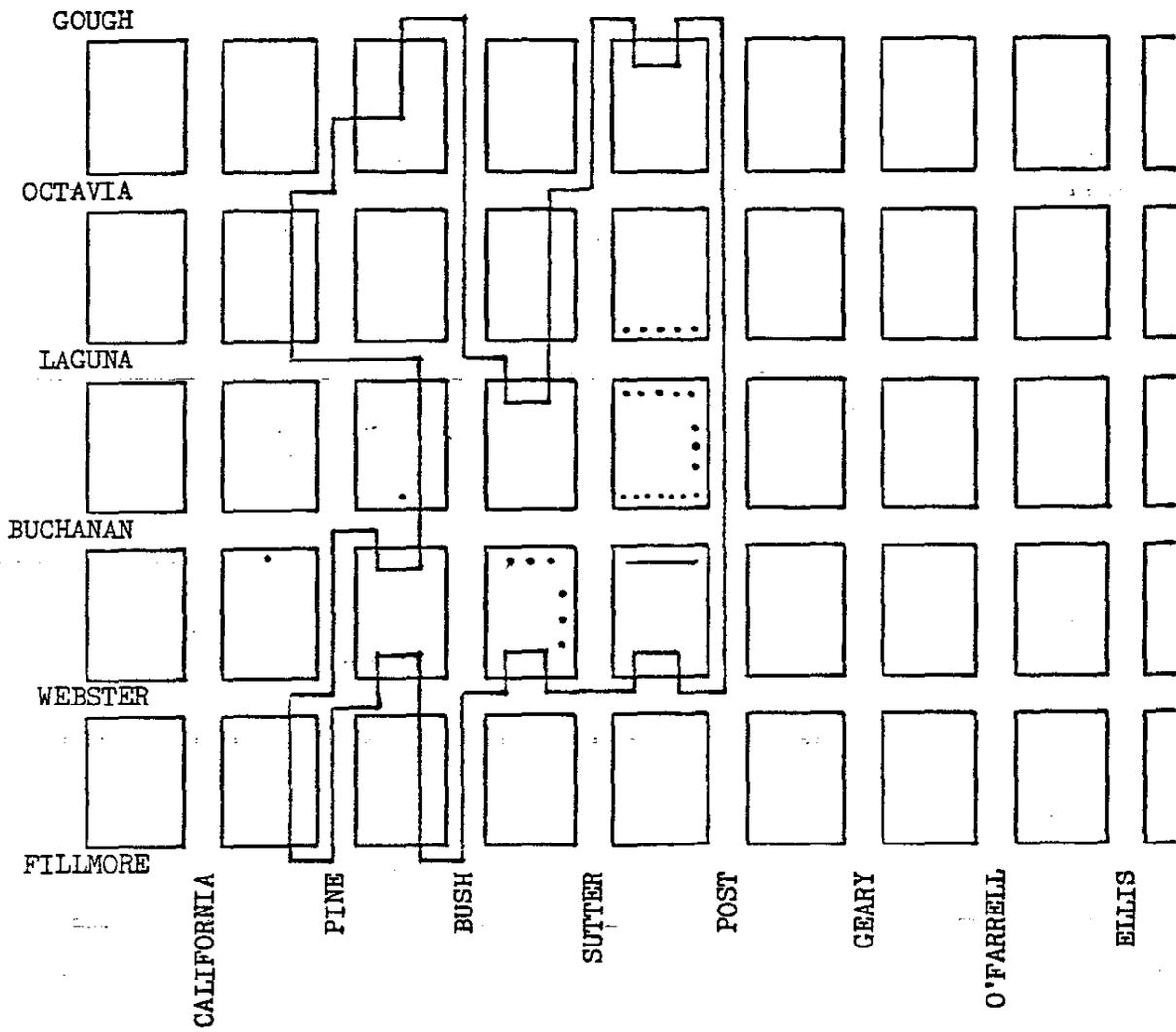
Map 5-11

Nihonmachi 1973



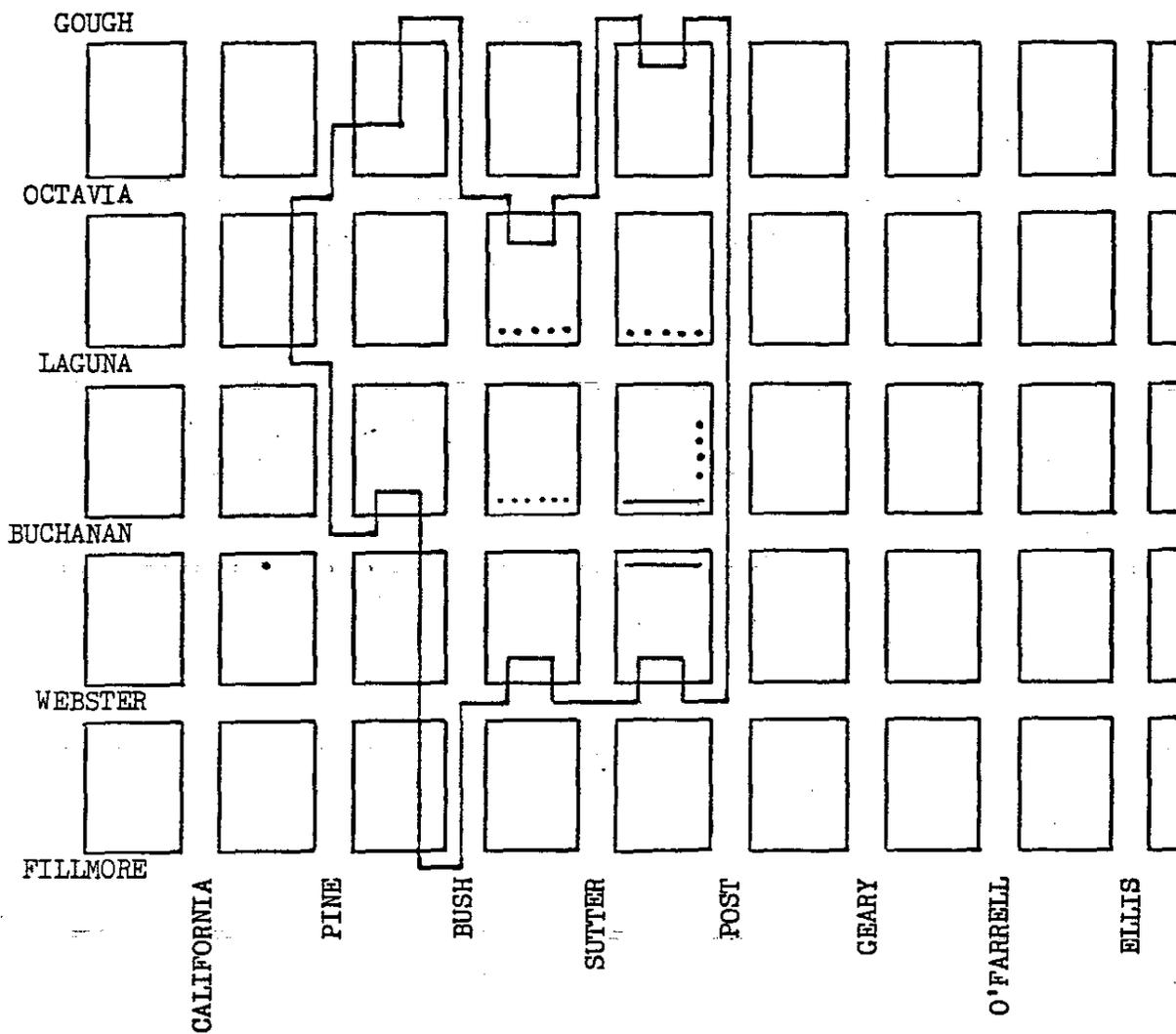
Map 5-12

Nihonmachi 1975



Map 5-13

Nihonmachi 1977



Map 5-14

Nihonmachi 1980

Chapter 6

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Demographic Changes

There is a definite pattern to the changes that took place in Nihonmachi during redevelopment. All the indicators examined showed that there was a decline during the start of redevelopment but towards the last five years an increase occurred. The change in geographic area vividly shows the effects of the Western Addition A-1 project that caused the part of Nihonmachi south of Post Street to never regain a significant number of Japanese surnamed residents. The increase in the area in recent years came from the construction of the JARF project and other multi-unit projects on the east part of Nihonmachi. The number of residential units followed a similar pattern. The increase in multiple unit residences is depicted in the increase in residential unit density over the last five years.

A surprising finding was that the number of residential units occupied by Japanese surnamed people rose after 1975 to surpass the 1953 number. Some of this increase is due to the JARF project, but this cannot account for the total increase. The reason why this finding is surprising is that discussions with long-time residents of Nihonmachi virtually always center around how much the Japanese population has declined in Nihonmachi.

Specific demographics are not available about the incomes and family size of the "new" Japanese surnamed residents of Nihonmachi, but because of the several senior citizens housing developments and the increase in market rate housing, it is safe to assume that there are fewer families with children living in Nihonmachi. This change to older residents and residents with higher incomes and fewer large families, would reduce the community activity normally associated with an ethnic community like Nihonmachi. This would then give an appearance of a smaller population. There is also a significant amount of Japanese immigrants (newcomers) living in Nihonmachi, who do have Japanese surnames, but are a change from types of people with Japanese surnames counted in the earlier years.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the data used to count Japanese surnamed occupants came from a city directory and these sources have historically underestimated minority, and especially non-English speaking people.

The Role of the Redevelopment Agency

In redevelopment projects that take decades to complete, many conditions change, so it is difficult to judge how well the Redevelopment Agency has met its goals. As was stated in Chapter 3, some sort of redevelopment was needed in Nihonmachi and in other areas of San Francisco. Since many of the Redevelopment Agency's projects are nearing completion it is possible to analyze the changes that have taken place in these redevelopment areas.

Obviously the Redevelopment Agency thinks that they have done

a good job. In a 1977 report,¹ the Redevelopment Agency state that they have made the following contributions to San Francisco:

1. Nearly half of all the housing built in San Francisco in the last five years has been built in redevelopment areas.
2. 66% of that housing has been for persons of low and moderate income. And 32% has been for senior citizens.
3. \$15,128,000 in local property tax was collected in redevelopment areas in FY 1975. When completed, 12% of all property taxes in San Francisco will come from redevelopment areas although redevelopment accounts for only 3.6% of the land area. Prior to redevelopment 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ % of property taxes came from redevelopment areas.
4. Presently 10,000 people work in redevelopment areas. When completed, 64,000 permanent jobs will exist in redevelopment areas.
5. Nine new parks and 10 mini-parks, comprising 55 acres, have been added to San Francisco park system.

Statistically these figures are true, but they do not reflect the total effect of redevelopment on the people of San Francisco. The goal of eliminating decaying slums in redevelopment areas has been achieved, but not all former residents were able to return to new or rehabilitated housing. Other slums, such as Hunters Point and the Tenderloin, have become more crowded with "refugees" from redevelopment areas. In the case of Nihonmachi, the community was modernized and the tax base and property values have increased dramatically. Although statistics show that the number of residential units and Japanese sur-named occupants are at the same level as they were before redevelopment, the character of the community has vastly changed with many former

¹San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, San Francisco Redevelopment 1976-1977, (San Francisco, 1977), page 9.

residents living in other parts of San Francisco. As was shown in Chapter 5, business interests have played an important role in the actions of the Redevelopment Agency. Economic development of redevelopment areas was a major goal of the Redevelopment Agency because some sort of action was needed to stop decay of the city. Justification for massive redevelopment, sometimes at the cost of some of the city's less fortunate citizens, was based on the city's right to renew itself. This right often confronted peoples right to live in and preserve their community. In the Western Addition, aside from the social aspects of redevelopment, redevelopment definitely improved the value of the land and increased tax monies going to the city. Table 6-1 shows the figures.

Redevelopment, being a new type of process, was very susceptible to mistakes during early redevelopment projects. One obvious mistake was the underestimation of the issue of relocation rights. Eventually federal law was revised to better protect and compensate people relocated by redevelopment projects but by that time the people in the communities affected by redevelopment were organized and resisting redevelopment. Another underestimation was the need for sufficient low-to-moderate income housing in redevelopment areas. The Redevelopment Agency admits that it made a mistake in the Western Addition A-1 project as is quoted below in one Redevelopment Agency publication.²

"Yet criticism of renewal has at times been strong in San Francisco. The chief reason dates back to the planning of Western Addition A-1, more than a dozen years ago.

Renewal of A-1, planned with community organizations in existence at the time, has turned that area into

²San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, San Francisco Redevelopment 1967-1968, (San Francisco, 1968), page 2.

Table 6-1

Assessed Valuations and Annual Tax Revenues
Before and After Redevelopment^a
(in thousands of dollars)

	Western Addition A-1	Western Addition A-2
<u>Assessed Valuations^b</u>		
Before Redevelopment	\$ 2,849	\$30,228
Current (1980)	27,393	39,321
After Redevelopment	27,393	56,900
<u>Annual Tax Revenue^c</u>		
Before Redevelopment	\$ 142	\$1,502
Current (1980)	1,361	1,954
After Redevelopment	1,361	2,828
Dollar Increase	\$1,219	\$1,326
Percent Increase	958%	188%

^aFrom 1980 report.

^bBefore exemptions. Figures represent 25% of actual cash value.

^cThe 1980 rate of \$4.97 per \$100.00 of assessed value is applied to all assessed value figures for purposes of comparison.

an attractive neighborhood - the envy of many cities throughout the United States. Many institutions of social and cultural services have emerged.

But with the exception of 331 units of moderate-priced senior citizen and family housing, the new housing has not met the needs of the residents of the former slum."

Although the Redevelopment Agency did not meet the need of the residents, the Western Addition A-1 project did not meet with mass resistance as the later A-2 project did. There are several explanations why this did not happen. The primary reason is that information about the redevelopment project was not as widely circulated and was not a controversial issue for the A-1 project as it was for the A-2 project. It appears as if the residents of the A-1 area did not pay much attention to the redevelopment plan and just obeyed the Redevelopment Agency when they were told to move. Another reason why resistance was low was because housing outside the A-1 area was relatively easy to find compared to after the A-2 project started. Many of the A-1 project area residents moved into the A-2 area, unaware that they would soon be forced to move again.

The Redevelopment Agency, acknowledging that it made mistakes and that communities were organizing against redevelopment, had to change its approach and policies. In Nihonmachi this was done by offering the Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation (NCDC) control over a four square block area. The more influential and powerful people in Nihonmachi were appeased and they did not resist other redevelopment actions in Nihonmachi.

Although the merchants were appeased, there were others in the community who were not. Organizations such as the Committee Against Nihonmachi Evictions (CANE) called for more low-to-moderate income

housing that was not adequately planned for in the redeveloped Nihonmachi. CANE provided to be a force to be recognized but the Redevelopment Agency was too powerful for CANE to stop. However, this was the same time period that the Redevelopment Agency was being criticized in other projects, especially the Yerba Buena Project. Bad public relations hurt the Redevelopment Agency and also funding for its projects was being cut-back by the federal government. This "turbulence" the Redevelopment Agency was going through did affect its projects and its image among the leaders of San Francisco.

The Redevelopment Agency was faced with a dilemma. Communities cried for more subsidized housing, which was not profitable to build and did not significantly raise revenues for the city. At the same time the Redevelopment Agency was obligated to stay within the Master Plan for the city which called for a mix of housing types and zonings in redevelopment areas, and also to justify their expenditures by increasing tax revenues in redevelopment areas. In Nihonmachi the Redevelopment Agency essentially ignored the need for low-to-moderate income housing, but in other areas of the A-2 projects, they deviated and allowed additional low-income housing. Advocates of low-income housing in Nihonmachi did not have the power to influence the Redevelopment Agency.

In summary, the Redevelopment Agency did meet its goals of increasing the land value and tax revenues in redevelopment areas and did provide needed new and rehabilitated housing. However, many people did not benefit from redevelopment and their rights were ignored by the Redevelopment Agency.

The Role of the Nihonmachi Community

With the Western Addition A-1 project being one of the first

redevelopment projects in San Francisco, the Nihonmachi community affected by the A-1 project were not prepared to react. They asked for information and the Redevelopment Agency provided it, but no type of resistance formed. After the A-1 project was started and the A-2 project was about to begin, community concern did surface and the United Committee for the Japanese Community (UCJC) formed to work with the Redevelopment Agency. At the same time a more militant, predominantly Black, organization called the Western Addition Community Organization (WACO) was confronting the Redevelopment Agency over relocation issues. The leaders of the Nihonmachi chose to attempt to cooperate with the Redevelopment Agency rather than be confrontive. During the development of the four-block Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation (NCDC) plan, which did not call for any subsidized housing, there was no significant public outcry for this type of housing. The seemingly complacent mood of the Nihonmachi community was probably interpreted by the Redevelopment Agency as being in favor of NCDC's plan.

It was not until the formation of CANE in 1973 that organized opposition to redevelopment formed in Nihomachi. There was obvious displeasure about redevelopment in Nihonmachi as CANE's membership grew to over 300. A question that needs to be asked is why the issues that CANE members have expressed concern about were not addressed during the formation of the NCDC plan. This question can be answered by examining the historical context of the time.

NCDC was formed in 1968. This coincided with the rise in civil right activities that swept the nation. Along with the Black groups, other minorities including Asians, were inspired to discover their heritage and speak up for their rights. The Japanese in the United States

have suffered oppression since they first arrived. As immigrants they were discriminated against and even as citizens they were forced into concentration camps during World War II. Although there were some instances of resistance from the Japanese, they were trying to fit into the "mainstream" of American society as a means to end discrimination. Therefore they were reluctant to confront a governmental agency such as the Redevelopment Agency.

It was not until the younger members of the Nihonmachi community were "enlightened" to be able to react to what redevelopment was doing to their community that an organized approach to community education and organizing could take place. It was CANE's task to show the Nihonmachi community that their passivity would not help end discrimination, but would result in their loss of their right to preserve their community.

By the time CANE grew to be a force in the community, NCDC had a strong hold on much of the land left in Nihonmachi and redevelopment was well established. The question of who really represents the community was argued by NCDC and CANE. CANE tried to expose NCDC as being advocates for only their own business interests rather than the good of the community. This business orientation was quite obvious in looking at the membership of NCDC and their actions, but NCDC was promoting the same goal of economic development that the Redevelopment Agency promoted, so CANE's criticisms were not listened to by those in power.

This close tie with NCDC and the Redevelopment Agency was too powerful for CANE to overcome. The Redevelopment Agency was able to please NCDC by ensuring that their interests would be prov-

ided for by giving them control of the four block area. In turn, the Redevelopment Agency used NCDC as an example of collaborative planning and community input into the redevelopment process. Also the Redevelopment Agency was able to persuade NCDC to allow Kintetsu to build a hotel and bowling alley within NCDC's four block area. Some NCDC members objected to this, but the Redevelopment Agency was able to get what it wanted.

The issue put forward by CANE of self interest in NCDC was valid. NCDC is a profit oriented corporation with a membership that is open only open to those who buy shares of the corporation. Therefore it was not truly representative of the community. However even if NCDC was not in existence, CANE most likely would not have been able to influence redevelopment in Nihonmachi because of its fundamental differences with the Redevelopment Agency.

Another factor which reduced CANE's effectiveness was that the very force they were battling, redevelopment, was constantly reducing CANE's membership. Evictions and relocations of Nihonmachi residents took its toll on CANE's members and the organization was not able to grow after it reached a certain point. As the population of Nihonmachi changed, so did CANE's membership, with more and more members living outside Nihonmachi.

In summary, the Nihonmachi community was not able to preserve their community and many of its residents were not able to stay in the community. The Redevelopment Agency was too powerful to allow a community as small as Nihonmachi influence it. Only those with similar goals and ideology such as NCDC, were allowed to participate in a cooperative manner with the Redevelopment Agency.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

When examining Nihonmachi as it exists today, it is evident that major changes have taken place both physically and in the make-up of the population. Redevelopment was the major cause of this change. The "old" Nihonmachi no longer exists because the Redevelopment Agency did not plan for the preservation of the "old" Nihonmachi. In effect, the Redevelopment Agency did not hold valid the community's right to exist and caused the dispersal of its residents. With the building of the Japan Trade Center, the Buchanan Mall, and the Kyoto Inn, the Redevelopment Agency tried to make Nihonmachi into a tourist attraction. This further changed the character of the community. Many low-to-moderate income housing units were destroyed during redevelopment and the housing replacing them were not affordable or adequate in number for former residents to move back into. This change was allowed to happen because the Nihonmachi community was not given adequate input into the redevelopment process. The Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation (NCDC) was not a legitimate representative of the Nihonmachi community. The Western Addition Project Area Committee (WAPAC) did not try to represent Nihonmachi. This left the residents of Nihonmachi essentially without any representation. In addition to being left out of the decision making, there is strong evidence that the

Redevelopment Agency, on many occasions, blatantly disregarded the rights of Nihonmachi residents to relocation rights and benefits.

The support the Redevelopment Agency recieved from business interests and politicians gave the Agency too much power and momentum to be influenced by the residents of Nihonmachi. The relatively small size of Nihonmachi compared to the rest of the A-2 project area had much to do with the ineffectiveness of community resistance.

Statistics show that the Redevelopment Agency has met most of its goals in Nihonmachi. New housing was constructed and new commercial establishments have increased city revenue in Nihonmachi. However if redevelopment is examined in a broader perspective, as I have done in this paper, the total result shows less of a success. The assumptions I make in Chapter 3 concerning the need for low-to-moderate income housing and community preservation were not held to be valid assumptions by the Redevelopment Agency. Neither were seen as a goal, therefore virtually no attempt was made to meet these assumed goals.

An approach that could have been taken by the Redevelopment Agency was to attempt collaborative planning as was done with WAPAC. WAPAC was able to influence and change Redevelopment Agency policy as was shown in the increased emphasis of low income housing in the A-2 project. Another Project Area Committee made up of elected Nihonmachi residents could have acted in Nihonmachi as WAPAC did in the total A-2 project. A better representation of the Nihonmachi community could have been available for the Redevelopment Agency to work with.

Another approach, which would have eased relocation problems, is "phased redevelopment". This concept is based on building new replacement housing before demolition of old housing to allow residents an opportunity to move immediately into replacement housing within the community. Then, the vacated site could be demolished and a new structure built. Because there is generally an increase in the number of units in new construction, this approach, theoretically, allows former residents to be immediately rehoused within the community and leaves land for new developments. This process is slower than clearance-type projects, but it eases the impact of redevelopment on a community.

Neither of the above approaches was taken in Nihonmachi. Had they been attempted, Nihonmachi could look different than it does now. However, it is too late to initiate either of the two approaches and one must look at what can be done today.

In Nihonmachi today, there is a need for low income housing, particularly for the elderly. The Japanese American Religious Federation (JARF) project meets part of this need, but the need still exists as is evident by the waiting list to get into the subsidized units in the JARF project. There is also a need for low-to-moderate income family housing that was virtually eliminated in redevelopment. And finally there is a need for a community center. Although Nihonmachi is not the community it once was, the community center would help serve the existing community and those who come to Nihonmachi for social and cultural events.

There are still sites within Nihonmachi, or on the near fringe

the redevelopment that devastated the community in the past. Groups such as JCUH can be a foundation to build upon, but groups such as these need help to become established so that they can secure grants and loans to continue their work. The Redevelopment Agency can help in these matters by acting as a "conduit" for grants and loans.

There are several sites in the Nihonmachi area that can be used for purposes that are beneficial to the Nihonmachi community. With cooperation from the Redevelopment Agency, groups such as JCUH can start to rebuild and revitalize Nihonmachi. Although one cannot expect a transformation back to the way it was in the 1950's, it is very possible to return families to Nihonmachi, bring back small businesses, and recapture a community spirit.

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