



Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application Number: LBR-2025-26-001
Business Name: Miseki Jewelry
Business Address: 1737 Post St., #303
District: District 5
Applicant: Tomoya Yamashita, Co-Owner
Nomination Date: July 7, 2025
Nominated By: Supervisor Bilal Mahmood

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes No

No physical storefront from 1967 to 1968 (1 year)
1737 Post St. from 1968 to 1975 (7 years)
1737 Post St., #303 from 1975 to Present (51 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes No

FEATURES OR TRADITIONS: Jewelry store

NOTES: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: February 18, 2026

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program
Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
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Member, Board of Supervisors

District 5



City and County of San Francisco

BILAL MAHMOOD

馬百樂

July 07, 2025

Richard Kurylo
Office of Small Business, Legacy Business
City Hall, Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mr. Kurylo,

I am writing to nominate Miseki Jewelry, a beloved long-standing business located in the heart of Japantown, to be added to the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry.

Miseki Jewelry first opened its doors in March 1967, and for over five decades, has served as a cornerstone of the Japantown community. Specializing in rare Japanese Akoya pearls and finely curated jewelry, Miseki blends traditional Japanese craftsmanship with exceptional, personalized service. It is one of the oldest operating businesses in the Japan Center Mall, serving generations of San Franciscans as well as visitors from around the world.

In addition to its commercial presence, Miseki Jewelry has played a meaningful role in preserving and uplifting Japanese American culture and heritage. For decades, the business has actively participated in the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival, receiving formal recognition from former Mayor Willie Brown for its contributions to community celebration and cultural preservation.

Miseki Jewelry exemplifies what the Legacy Business Registry seeks to honor: a business that contributes not only economically but also culturally and historically to San Francisco's identity. The shop's enduring presence, family ownership, and community involvement represent the resilience and spirit of small businesses that help define District 5 and San Francisco at large.

The business is located at 1737 Post Street, Suite #303, San Francisco, CA 94115, and can be reached at (415) 567-2400.

I wholly support the nomination of Miseki Jewelry to the Legacy Business Registry and hope to see it formally recognized for its long-standing commitment to our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bilal Mahmood', written in a cursive style.

Bilal Mahmood
Supervisor, District 5
City and County of San Francisco



Legacy Business Registry Application



Business Information

Business name: Miseki Jewelry

Business owner name(s): Asuka Saito and Tomoya Yamashita

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

Current business address: 1737 Post St., #303, San Francisco, CA 94115

Business phone number: 415-567-2400

Business email: msk.design.sf@gmail.com

Mailing address (if different than above):

Website: <https://miskionline.com>

Link to social media: <https://www.instagram.com/miseki.sf>

Link to social media #2: <https://www.tiktok.com/@miseki.sf>

7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN): 1151371

Contact Person Information

Contact person name: Tomoya Yamashita

Contact person title: Co-Owner

Contact phone number:

Contact email: msk.design.sf@gmail.com

Business Locations

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location.

Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business.

If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Applicant Disclosures

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Name:

Signature: 

Date:

Miseki Jewelry

Written Historical Narrative

Introduction

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

Miseki Jewelry is a Japanese-owned fine jewelry store located in the heart of San Francisco's historic Japantown. Founded in 1967, it is an integral part of the neighborhood's cultural and commercial landscape.

The store is particularly known for its exquisite Japanese Akoya pearls—sourced directly from Japan—which represent the highest standards in traditional Japanese pearl cultivation. These pearls are celebrated for their delicate luster, refinement, and cultural significance. Miseki Jewelry also offers South Sea pearls, Tahitian pearls, opals, and a thoughtfully curated collection of fine gold and platinum jewelry. Its offerings include high-quality rings, necklaces, earrings, and bracelets—many designed in-house or sourced from renowned Japanese and international artisans.

In addition to its signature jewelry selection, the store provides expert pearl restringing, custom design, jewelry repair, and earring matching services. Miseki Jewelry has also been an authorized dealer of Seiko, Citizen, and Casio G-SHOCK watches for decades, offering trusted access to Japan's premier timepieces.

b. Describe whom the business serves.

Miseki Jewelry serves a wide range of customers, including longtime local residents, international tourists, the Japanese American community, and loyal patrons who return year after year — even across generations. One of the most touching aspects of the business is how frequently it welcomes three generations from the same family. It is not uncommon for grandparents who once purchased engagement rings here to return with their children, who now come as adults to select jewelry for their own children — a living testament to trust and continuity.

Customers seek the store for its authentic Japanese craftsmanship, warm personalized service, and timeless fine jewelry. As a cultural and commercial anchor in San Francisco's Japantown, Miseki Jewelry remains a cherished destination where tradition, trust, and excellence are passed down through the years.

Miseki Jewelry has served multiple generations of local families and international visitors alike, who return for its trusted service, product integrity, and deep cultural roots. Personalized service and in-depth product knowledge continue to define the business's legacy.

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

Fine jewelry and pearl experts.

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

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

Miseki Jewelry was founded on March 28, 1967, by Kenji Kaneda, president of Mikuni Industries Corp. During its first year, from 1967 to early 1968, the business did not operate from a physical storefront. Instead, Mr. Kaneda provided jewelry services through an appointment-based, traveling operation, visiting customers directly. With the grand opening of the Japan Center on March 28, 1968, Miseki Jewelry established its first physical storefront and has continuously operated a brick-and-mortar location from that date to the present day. The business was also formally incorporated in California on March 28, 1968.

The founding address in the Japan Center Mall was 1737 Post Street. At the time, the Japan Center did not yet use individual suite or room numbers. For this reason, there was no original unit number associated with the business location. In 1975, Miseki Jewelry relocated to #303 within the same building, where it continues to operate today.

While Miseki Jewelry briefly expanded to locations such as Honolulu, Mexico City, Tokyo, and Los Angeles, San Francisco has always remained its founding and principal location.

Ownership was passed to Masaharu Nagasuga in October 1982, who expanded the business and served as a community leader in Japantown.

In October 2023, ownership officially transitioned to Asuka Saito and her husband Tomoya Yamashita, who continue to run the business today under MSK DESIGN, LLC. Asuka Saito, who had worked at Miseki Jewelry for over 15 years under the mentorship of Mr. Nagasuga, now leads the business with a deep understanding and continuity of its values and traditions, together with her husband.

Throughout all ownership and corporate transitions, the store has continuously operated under the name "Miseki Jewelry" since its founding in 1967.

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

1967 to 1982:	Kenji Kaneda
1982 to 2023:	Masaharu Nagasuga
2023 to Present:	Asuka Saito; Tomoya Yamashita

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

The store has never ceased operations in San Francisco for any extended period.

The store has remained open through multiple global and local challenges—including the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the economic downturn following the September 11 attacks, the 2008 global financial crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, the shop adjusted by shortening hours and limiting in-person services, but it did not close.

Thanks to the unwavering support and loyalty of their local community and customers, Miseki Jewelry has continued to serve San Francisco without interruption since 1967. This consistent presence reflects not only the business' resilience but also the deep mutual trust and connection with the community it serves.

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

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

Since its founding, Miseki Jewelry has served as a cultural anchor in San Francisco's Japantown and made lasting contributions to the Japanese American community.

As a Japanese-owned business in one of the few remaining Japantowns in the United States, Miseki Jewelry plays a vital role in preserving and sharing traditional Japanese craftsmanship. The continued stewardship by Japanese owners ensures authenticity and cultural continuity, making the store a living expression of Japantown's heritage.

Since the inception of the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival (NCCBF) in 1968—the largest celebration of Asian tradition on the West Coast—Miseki Jewelry has played a vital role in supporting the community and preserving cultural heritage. The business began supporting the NCCBF and the Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Program in 1968, under the leadership of its founder, Kenji Kaneda. Beginning in 1987, under second-generation owner Masaharu Nagasuga, Miseki Jewelry established the tradition of annually donating a specially designed commemorative necklace to the First Princess of the Queen Program, one of the court members selected during the annual festival. This tradition has continued without interruption to the present day.

Since 1968, the business has supported the NCCBF Queen Program by donating a specially designed necklace each year as the official award for the First Princess, one of the court members selected during the annual festival. Since 2012, co-owner and jewelry designer Asuka

Saito has personally designed and presented the necklace, continuing this meaningful tradition with great care and dedication across generations. Today, Miseki Jewelry continues to serve as a Platinum Sponsor, actively contributing to the intergenerational celebration of Japanese American pride and identity.

Beyond its involvement in community events, Miseki Jewelry was also previously featured on the official website of ANA (All Nippon Airways, Japan's largest airline) as a partner store, offering exclusive perks to ANA Mileage Club members visiting San Francisco. This partnership reflects the business's long-standing reputation, cultural connection, and commitment to serving both local and international communities.

Through these efforts, Miseki Jewelry has become more than just a business—it serves as both a cultural steward and a symbol of continuity within the Japanese American community in San Francisco.

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

On April 13, 2002, Masaharu Nagasuga—Miseki Jewelry's second-owner and a noted gemologist—was formally honored by the Mayor of San Francisco and the City and County of San Francisco with a Certificate of Appreciation. This award recognized his decade-long commitment to the Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Program. Specifically, the mayor praised his generosity in designing and donating a special pendant for each year's First Princess. The recognition highlights Miseki Jewelry's deep cultural and civic contributions to the Japanese American community in San Francisco.

On June 1, 2015, and July 1, 2016, Benh Nakajo, then Chairperson of the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Program (now Chairperson Emeritus), sent letters of appreciation to Miseki Jewelry for its continued sponsorship and cultural contributions. Both letters specifically mentioned the commemorative necklace designed by Asuka Saito as a special gift presented to that year's First Princess. This continued recognition from community leaders underscores Miseki Jewelry's role in sustaining and enriching meaningful local traditions across generations.

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

Miseki Jewelry has long demonstrated its commitment to the community through cultural sponsorship, charitable giving, and active participation in neighborhood organizations.

The business is a Platinum Sponsor of the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Program and has donated a specially designed necklace each year to the First Princess over many decades. Beginning in 2012, the necklace presented to the First Princess has been designed by Miseki Jewelry's third-generation co-owner and jewelry designer, Asuka Saito.

In addition to event sponsorship, Miseki Jewelry maintains strong relationships with Japantown-based nonprofit and civic groups. The business is a proud member of the Japanese

Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCNC) and the Japantown Merchants Association and actively engages with the Japantown Task Force and the Japantown Community Benefit District (JCBD) through regular communication, participation in initiatives, and support of neighborhood improvement programs.

These ongoing efforts reflect the business' deep commitment to sustaining the cultural, social, and economic fabric of San Francisco's Japantown and its surrounding communities.

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

Miseki Jewelry has been consistently included in various local and cultural publications that reflect its long-standing presence and role in San Francisco's Japantown.

Since the inception of the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival (NCCBF) in 1968, Miseki Jewelry has been listed every year in the official festival program booklet, demonstrating over 50 years of uninterrupted cultural support. The business is also regularly featured in the Japantown merchant map and various community guidebooks published by local nonprofit organizations, highlighting its importance as a neighborhood fixture.

In April 2015, Asuka Saito—Miseki Jewelry's current owner and designer—was featured in *J-Weekly*, a local Japanese-language newspaper, for her role in designing and personally presenting the commemorative necklace given annually to the First Princess of the NCCBF Queen Program. Although this article was published in print only, it illustrates the business' recognized cultural contributions within the Japanese American community.

Additionally, the name Miseki Jewelry appears in *San Francisco's Japantown*, a historical publication by The Japantown Task Force, Inc., which documents the origins and resilience of the community through archival images and stories. Being named in this book, part of Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America* series, affirms the business' place in the documented history of Japantown.

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

On April 13, 2002, Miseki Jewelry's second-generation owner, Masaharu Nagasuga, received an official Certificate of Appreciation from the mayor of the City and County of San Francisco. This commendation recognized over a decade of cultural contributions through the annual donation of an original pendant to the First Princess of the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Program. It reflects the business' deep-rooted involvement in the Japanese American community and its long-standing civic engagement.

More recently, on May 28, 2024, Miseki Jewelry was selected as a finalist in SFGATE's "[Best of Bay Area 2024](#)" in the Best Jewelry Store category. This recognition from a major regional media outlet reflects the business's continued relevance and strong support from the Bay Area

community. This contemporary recognition, driven by local community votes, reaffirms the enduring trust and affection San Franciscans hold for Miseki Jewelry.

Together, these honors reflect both longstanding trust from the local Japanese American community and contemporary recognition from the wider media and consumer base—demonstrating Miseki Jewelry’s enduring cultural impact and evolving presence in San Francisco’s business landscape.

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

If Miseki Jewelry were to close, San Francisco’s Japantown would lose one of its oldest, most culturally significant businesses—one that has continuously served the community since the 1960s as an original tenant of the Japan Center Malls.

Miseki Jewelry is more than a store. It is a cultural anchor that has supported generations of families with genuine Akoya pearls sourced directly from Japan, expert jewelry services rooted in Japanese tradition, and heartfelt guidance customers have trusted across decades. It may also be the last remaining business in Japantown that consistently offers authentic Japanese pearls through direct and official channels—an irreplaceable cultural and commercial role.

If it were to close, generations of loyal customers would lose a trusted destination to restore family heirlooms, find culturally meaningful gifts, and connect with their heritage. The closure would sever a unique bridge between Japan and the Japanese American community in San Francisco.

Beyond retail, Miseki Jewelry actively contributes to the cultural life of Japantown. Co-owner and third-generation designer Asuka Saito continues the cherished tradition of designing and presenting the annual necklace to the First Princess of the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival—an enduring community gesture that began decades ago and remains part of Japantown’s living history.

Her husband and co-owner, Tomoya Yamashita, brings a background in media and storytelling that has revitalized the store’s presence through social media and video content, helping Miseki Jewelry reach a new generation while staying true to its legacy. Together, they blend tradition and innovation, strengthening Japantown’s cultural fabric.

The loss of Miseki Jewelry would be felt far beyond its storefront. It would mark the disappearance of a rare cultural institution, diminish the intergenerational continuity of San Francisco’s Japantown, and erase an important piece of the city’s living heritage.

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

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

Miseki Jewelry has operated continuously inside what was originally known as the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center—now the Japan Center West Mall—making it the oldest surviving business in the mall. Although the exact suite number and interior location within the mall have changed slightly over the decades, the business has always remained within the same building complex, at the same official address: 1737 Post Street.

Today, the store is located in Suite #303, still within the Japan Center West Mall—one of San Francisco’s most historically and culturally significant buildings. Miseki Jewelry’s presence is closely tied to Japantown’s postwar revitalization and to the identity of the Japanese American community.

The business name, “Miseki” (美石)—meaning “beautiful stone” in Japanese—reflects a deep respect for Japanese aesthetics and values. The store’s original logo signage, elegant jewelry displays, and warm interior have been maintained with care, becoming familiar and trusted features for generations of local customers and international visitors. Notably, the storefront sign—still in use today—has been preserved since the early years, providing a sense of visual continuity and honoring the business’s enduring legacy.

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

Japanese-owned heritage jeweler specializing in pearls and watches.

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

Current owners Asuka Saito and Tomoya Yamashita—who assumed ownership of Miseki Jewelry in 2023—are fully committed to owning and managing the business for decades to come. Their vision is to ensure that Miseki Jewelry continues to thrive as a cultural and historical anchor in San Francisco’s Japantown.

They intend to keep the business in the family and, in time, hope to pass it on to the next generation, possibly even their son, so that the spirit and tradition of Miseki Jewelry can live on. As one of the few remaining Japanese-owned businesses in the neighborhood, their role goes beyond retail. They aim to preserve and evolve Japanese cultural values through expert offerings such as authentic Akoya pearls, hand-selected Japanese timepieces, and Japanese-style customer service.

Their long-term plan is to build a sustainable and resilient business model that blends tradition with innovation—strengthening customer relationships, expanding bilingual digital outreach, and creating a platform that future generations can be proud to inherit.

d. What challenges are the business facing today?

Miseki Jewelry continues to face structural challenges common to legacy small businesses, including generational gaps in appreciation for traditional fine jewelry, the pressure to maintain relevance in an increasingly digital-first retail environment, and the need for sustainable long-term succession planning.

As a specialized business, recruiting staff with the cultural and technical knowledge to provide expert service in pearls and watches remains a challenge. Rising commercial rents and changes in mall management policies also present risks to long-term stability.

While the Japan Center Mall has remained more vibrant than other parts of downtown San Francisco, Miseki Jewelry must still adapt to shifting consumer behaviors. More customers are becoming disillusioned with mass-market retail and impersonal online shopping, instead seeking trusted, in-person experiences rooted in culture, authenticity, and service.

The store has benefited from this trend, seeing an increase in foot traffic, but sustaining this momentum requires continued innovation, bilingual engagement, and careful balancing of tradition with modern customer expectations. Additionally, as a cultural business, communicating the deeper value of Japanese craftsmanship and heritage to new generations and non-Japanese visitors remains a long-term challenge.

Legacy Business Program staff will add the following details:

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

Jewelry store.

b. Other special features of the business location, such as if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building at 1737 Post Street is “B - Unknown / Age Eligible.”

#misekissf

Miseki
since 1967

@miseki.sf

CITIZEN
SEIKO
G-SHOCK

CITIZEN
SEIKO
G-SHOCK



BUSINESS HOURS
MON 12:30 to 6:00
TUE 12:30 to 6:00
WED 12:30 to 6:00
THU 12:30 to 6:00
FRI 12:30 to 7:00
SAT 11:30 to 7:00
SUN 11:30 to 7:00

STERLING SILVER







Miseki
since 1967

SEIKO
watch

Official Jewelry

EMPLOYEES ONLY

RESERVED FOR A.M.A.





Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____

March 23, 2026

MISEKI JEWELRY

Application Number: LBR-2025-26-001
Business Name: Miseki Jewelry
Business Address: 1737 Post St., #303
District: District 5
Applicant: Tomoya Yamashita, Co-Owner
Nomination Date: July 7, 2025
Nominated By: Supervisor Bilal Mahmood
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Miseki Jewelry, currently located at 1737 Post St., #303.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included on the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on March 23, 2026, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Miseki Jewelry in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Miseki Jewelry.

Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
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Physical features or traditions that define the business:

- Jewelry store.

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

- Jewelry store.
-

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on March 23, 2026.

Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

- Ayes –
- Nays –
- Abstained –
- Absent –

Legacy Business Program

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1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
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LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: March 18, 2026

Filing Date: July 7, 2025
Case No.: 2026-001634LBR
Business Name: Miseki Jewelry
Business Address: 1737 Post Street #303
Zoning: Japantown Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District
50-X Height and Bulk District
Cultural District: Japantown Cultural District
Block/Lot: 0700/009
Applicant: Tomoya Yamashita
1737 Post Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Bilal Mahmood
Located In: District 5
Staff Contact: Elina Juvonen – 628-652-7381
Elina.Juvonen@sfgov.org

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

Miseki Jewelry was founded in 1967 by Kenji Kaneda, president of Mikuni Industries Corp. Since its founding, Miseki Jewelry has created beautiful jewelry rooted in Japanese craftsmanship and materials. Their specialty lies in the use of genuine Japanese Akoya pearls.

In addition to its signature jewelry selection, the store provides expert pearl restringing, custom design, jewelry repair, and earring matching services. Miseki Jewelry has also been an authorized dealer of Seiko, Citizen, and Casio G-SHOCK watches for decades, offering trusted access to Japan's premier timepieces.

After a year without a physical storefront, in 1968 the business became one of the first small businesses to occupy a storefront in the Japan Center Mall. While the suite number has changed once since then, Miseki Jewelry has operated continuously in the Japan Center, becoming the oldest surviving business in the mall. The business has been a contributor to the cultural heritage of Japantown since its founding, by supporting

cultural heritage events such as the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival (NCCBF). As a Japanese-owned business in one of the few remaining Japantowns in the United States, Miseki Jewelry plays a vital role in preserving and sharing traditional Japanese craftsmanship. The continued stewardship by Japanese owners ensures authenticity and cultural continuity, making the store a living expression of Japantown's heritage.

In 1982, ownership was transferred to Masaharu Nagasuga. Beginning in 1987, the business has donated a custom commemorative necklace to the First Princess of the annual Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival. In 2023, ownership was transferred to Asuka Saito and her husband Tomoya Yamashita. Before becoming the owner, Saito worked at Miseki Jewelry for over fifteen years under the mentorship of Masaharu Nagasuga. The store has remained open with no interruptions since 1967 – through multiple financial downturns and natural disasters. It remains an important cornerstone in Japantown.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. When was business founded?

The business was founded in 1967.

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

Yes. Miseki Jewelry qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Miseki Jewelry has operated continuously in San Francisco for 59 years.
- b. Miseki Jewelry has contributed to the history and identity of the Japantown neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Miseki Jewelry is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. Is the business associated with a culturally significant art, craft, cuisine, or tradition?

Yes. The business is associated with Japanese jewelry craftsmanship, with a particular focus on rare Japanese Akoya pearls. Miseki Jewelry also uplifts and preserves Japanese American culture in Japantown through participating in cultural programs.

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

Yes. The business is located within Japan Center West. This property has been identified for its association with modern architecture and landscape design, as well as for its cultural importance for Japanese Americans.

The Japanese Cultural and Trade Center was conceived of as part of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's (SFRA) Western Addition A-2 Project. The Center was designed to solicit investment from Japan and to create a retail destination that would appeal to San Francisco's tourists. The Center's design, like its funding, was a bi-national project. *Nisei* architect Minoru Yamasaki served as the primary designer, the local firm of Van Bourg/Nakamura (VBN) drafted the plans, and Osaka architecture professor Dr. Yoshiro Taniguchi contributed the design for the Peace Plaza and Pagoda, which was a gift to San Francisco from the people of the city of Osaka, Japan. The architecture of the Center was influenced by traditional Japanese features interpreted in contemporary forms and materials.

Construction began in 1965 and was completed in 1968. By 1970, the mall complex was known simply as "Japan Center" and included major tenants such as Hitachi, Nissan, Mitsubishi, the up-scale Miyako Hotel and Kinokuniya Bookstore. By the mid-1970s, the Center became populated by a new generation of small-scale independent retail shops, primarily operated by Japanese nationals who were later joined by Korean immigrants.

Minoru Yamasaki, the primary designer, was a well known Japanese American architect. The building has housed many important Japanese businesses.

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

No. The property is not listed on any historic resource registry.

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

The building the property is located in is mentioned in the San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970 Historic Context Statement. Miseki Jewelry itself is not mentioned in any historic context statements.

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

Yes. Miseki Jewelry has been consistently included in various local and cultural publications that reflect its long-standing presence and role in San Francisco's Japantown.

Since the inception of the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival (NCCBF) in 1968, Miseki Jewelry has been listed every year in the official festival program booklet, demonstrating over 50 years of uninterrupted cultural support. The business is also regularly featured in the Japantown merchant map and various community guidebooks published by local nonprofit organizations, highlighting its importance as a neighborhood fixture.

In April 2015, Asuka Saito—Miseki Jewelry's current owner and designer—was featured in *J-Weekly*, a local Japanese-language newspaper, for her role in designing and personally presenting the commemorative necklace given annually to the First Princess of the NCCBF Queen Program. Although this article was published in print only, it illustrates the business' recognized cultural contributions within the Japanese American community.

Additionally, the name Miseki Jewelry appears in *San Francisco's Japantown*, a historical publication by The Japantown Task Force, Inc., which documents the origins and resilience of the community through archival images and stories. Being named in this book, part of Arcadia Publishing's Images of America series, affirms the business' place in the documented history of Japantown.

On April 13, 2002, Miseki Jewelry's second-generation owner, Masaharu Nagasuga, received an official Certificate of Appreciation from the mayor of the City and County of San Francisco. This commendation recognized over a decade of cultural contributions through the annual donation of an original pendant to the First Princess of the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Program. It reflects the business' deep-rooted involvement in the Japanese American community and its long-standing civic engagement.

More recently, on May 28, 2024, Miseki Jewelry was selected as a finalist in SFGATE's "Best of Bay Area 2024" in the Best Jewelry Store category. This recognition from a major regional media outlet reflects the business's continued relevance and strong support from the Bay Area community.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

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

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

Miseki Jewelry is one of San Francisco's longest running Japanese businesses and is the oldest surviving business in Japan Center West Mall. It is well known in the community and through the region as a trusted jewelry shop for many occasions. The business is community oriented and contributes to Japantown cultural traditions, including by designing custom necklaces for the annual Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 1737 Post

Recommended by Applicant

- Jewelry store
- Logo signage

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

Basis for Recommendation

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

Attachments

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

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



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO.

HEARING DATE: MARCH 18, 2026

Case No.: 2026-001634LBR
Business Name: Miseki Jewelry
Business Address: 1737 POST ST #303 (Primary Address)
Zoning: Japantown Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District
50-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0700/009
Applicant: Tomoya Yamashita
1737 Post Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Bilal Mahmood
Located In: District 5
Staff Contact: Elina Juvonen – (628)-652-7381
Elina.Juvonen@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR MISEKI JEWELRY CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1737 POST ST #303, BLOCK/LOT 0700/009.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City’s history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on March 18, 2026, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that Miseki Jewelry qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby** recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Miseki Jewelry.

Location:

Current Locations:

- 1737 Post Street, (1968-present)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Businessz

- Jewelry store

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file to the Office of Small Business on March 18, 2026.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: March 18, 2026