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# KEARNY STREET CORRIDOR

AIA Urban Design Assistance Team

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PREFACE

This report has been prepared by an Urban Design Assistance Team organized by the Urban Design Committee of the San Francisco Chapter, American Institute of Architects. The City Planning Department gave its professional assistance and support, as did others who have professional knowledge and concern about Downtown San Francisco.

The background of our work is the Environmental Impact Report which is currently evaluating several proposals for changing City plans and regulations for downtown development, and the Administration of "Guiding Downtown Development", an interim document used in the review and approval of current building development.

The purpose of this report is to give the City an example of "District Urban Design Guidelines", for incorporation in new Master Plans and Development Regulations for Downtown.

The value of Urban Design Guidelines, Criteria, and Concepts specific to sub-districts within the Downtown was perceived in the administration of "Guiding Downtown Development", and in the preparation of the Urban Design portion of revisions to the Master Plan for Downtown.

Modeling itself on the National AIA R/UDAT program the team met for an intense work effort over the weekend of February 25, 26 & 27, 1983. Prior to that time background information was made available. Subsequently the completed work was assembled and reproduced.

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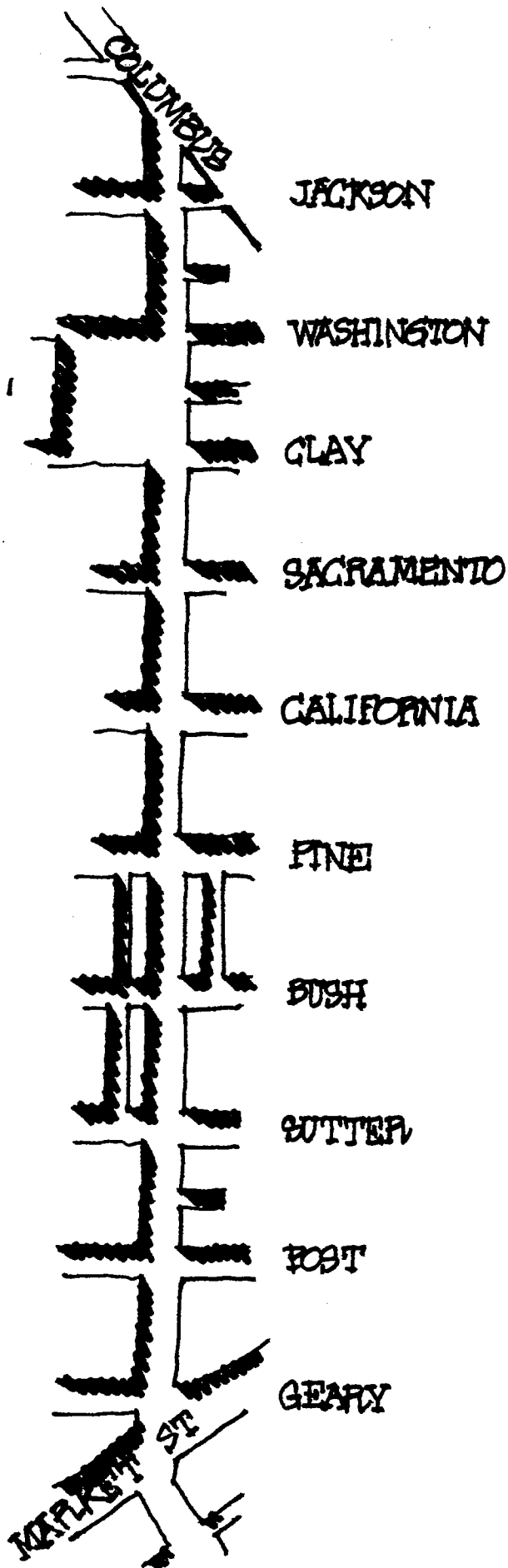


FIG. 1.  
STUDY AREA MAP

## INTRODUCTION

A District Design Policy is being considered in the preparation of new regulations for downtown development. Some readily definable districts are: Lower Market, Union Square, Retail, Financial Zones, Embarcadero, California Street Corridor, Chinatown, Golden Gateway, Kearny Street Corridor, Yerba Buena, etc. The Kearny Street Corridor was selected as the subject for this AIA Urban Design Assistance Team. It was selected because of its location between the high-rise buildings of the Financial Zone expanding to the east and the pedestrian-scaled, historically rich Union Square Retail Area also growing to the west. The basic question posed was "should the corridor be developed as highrise office, or as retail, or be retained as a transition between the two major uses."

## SUMMARY

The study began with the perception that Kearny Street has an important role in the downtown. Upon analysis, it is evident that the corridor is so important to the form and history of San Francisco that it justifies special planning guidelines as well as public investments to strengthen its special character and fulfill its potential.

To summarize briefly, this study analyzed Kearny Street from Market Street to Columbus Avenue. Evidence demonstrated that the Kearny Street Corridor has great importance to the city historically, functionally and visually. Today, there is substantial development pressure to build large office buildings in the Corridor, some of which have already begun to encroach on the downtown retail district. Rather than lose the distinction between the office district to the east and the retail area to the west, the recommendations in this study are aimed at

acknowledging Kearny Street as the important transitional zone that it is. Sub-areas in the corridor are identified and various elements are recommended to unify the Urban Design character of the corridor and to strengthen its unique quality.

#### EXISTING CONTEXT

Kearny Street was part of the principal route linking the peninsula to the early business district south of Market Street. It still serves as the major vehicular connection between the downtown retailing area, Chinatown, North Beach and Jackson Square areas. With its direct extension to Third Street, it will also become the connection to the redeveloping areas of south of Market Street, such as Yerba Buena Center and the proposed Mission Bay Project. Its function as a corridor was, is, and will continue to be most important in the Downtown.

At the same time that Kearny Street links the important districts of central San Francisco, it also serves as a boundary between the Union Square retail area and Chinatown, from the intensive, high-rise development of the financial district. This dual role of link and boundary give the corridor special visual and functional importance which must be recognized in the overall development plan for the area.

Kearny Street is wider than the streets paralleling it, so it is well suited for its dual role. The extra width carries its traffic burden easily, and gives the spacious feeling which identifies it as a place as well as a route.

Historically the intersection of Kearny and Market was the center of each day's activity in the city as the latest editions were distributed from the newspaper buildings there.

Lower Kearny Street became a principal retail apparel center in the many new buildings built cohesively in the decades after the earthquake. It is still a busy pedestrian area with historically significant buildings still serving office and retail uses.

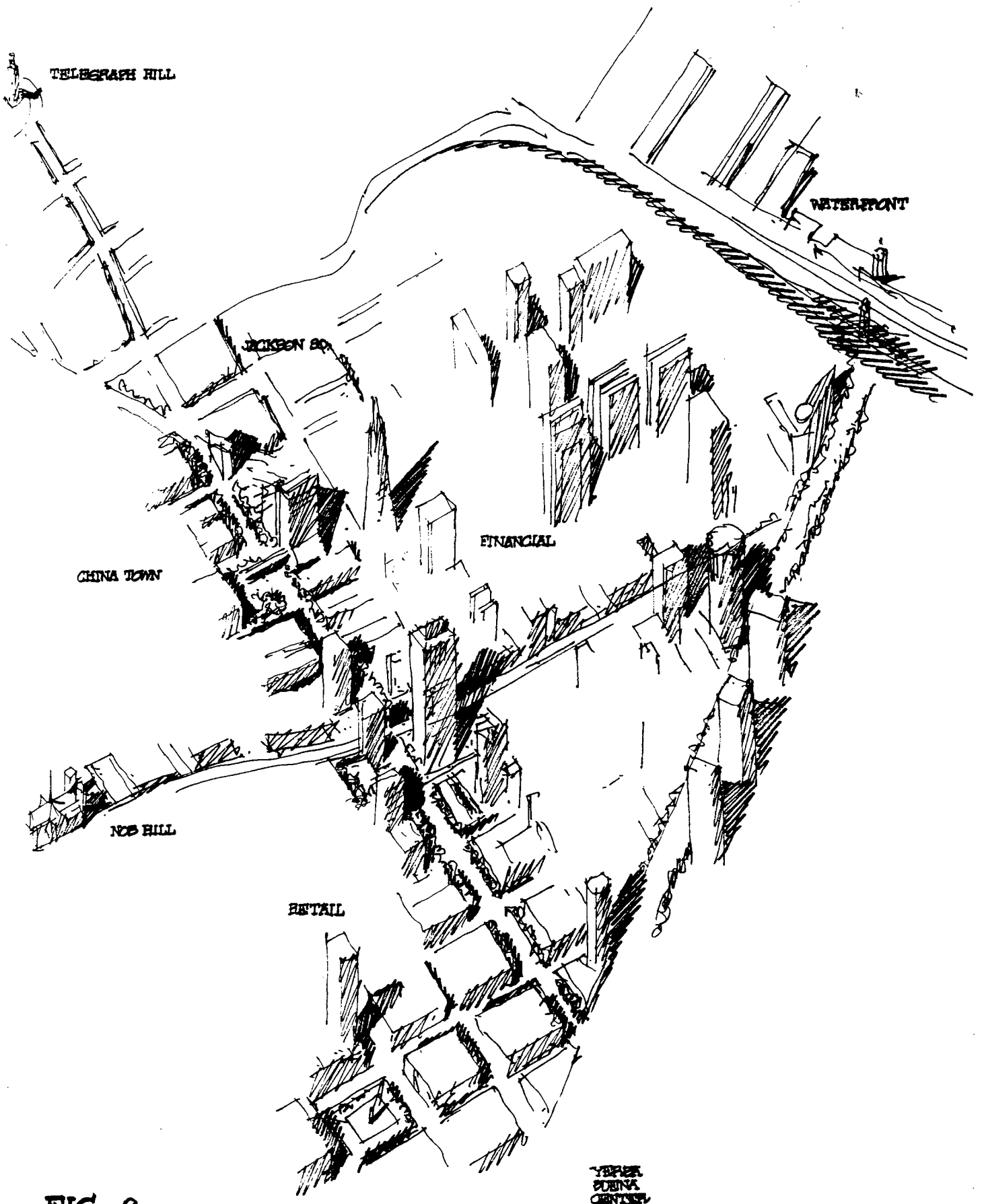


FIG. 2

# CONTEXT IN THE CITY

EXISTING LAND USE

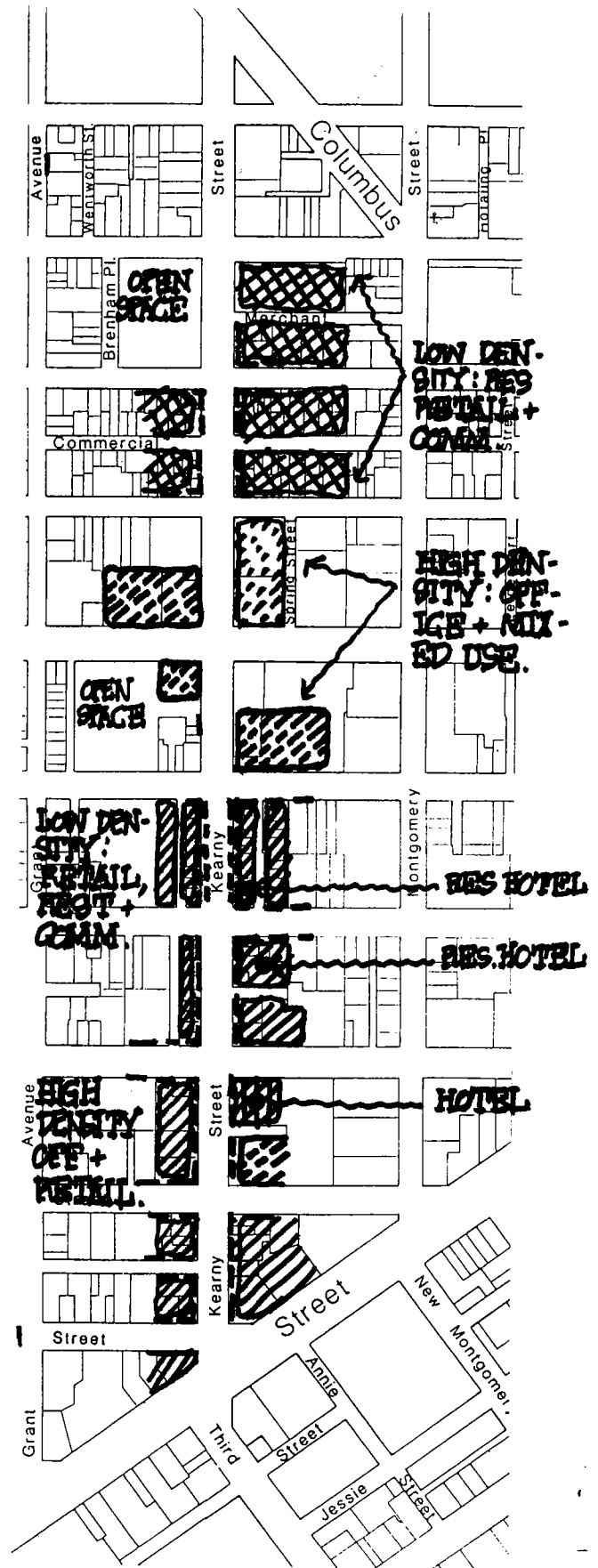
Land Use

In the two areas between Sutter and Pine and between Sacramento and Columbus, a myriad of small shops and restaurants operate to serve office workers in the growing financial district. Kearny Street tends to attract strollers and shoppers from Montgomery Street and beyond. The services are essential to those who work and live in the area. They are housed in small scale buildings located on small lots, some of which are bounded by Kearny on one side and an alley on the other. The area contributes sunshine, light and air to the pedestrians and workers operating as "almost-open space" for the downtown. In these areas Kearny Street is a sharp contrast to Montgomery Street to the east.

Housing is another use in the Kearny Street Corridor. There are tourist hotels and about 250 residential units in the area under study. The housing tends to consist of small, low cost units which are in great demand in the city. In the housing in the northern portion of the corridor is an extension of Chinatown.

Kearny carries vehicular traffic north and operates as part of the north/south couplet with Montgomery carrying the southbound vehicles. Most buses on Kearny use the lower portion of the street from Market to Sutter as they return westward through the retail district. The #15 bus follows Kearny north from Market to North Beach and to the waterfront. Buses cross virtually every east/west intersection along the corridor.

The 1979 Center City Circulation Study found that pedestrian volumes in the corridor were from 1,000 to 3,000 persons per peak hour. The daytime population of workers, residents and shoppers has increased and will increase still further upon the completion of buildings either approved or under construction in the area.



**FIG 3.**  
**EXISTING**  
**LAND USE**

EXISTING OPEN SPACE

There are a series of parks and plazas either contiguous or adjacent to Kearny Street. From north to south, they are Portsmouth Square, St. Mary's Square and the Bank of America Plaza. Also there are alleys which provide an additional pedestrian network and contribute to light and air in the area. At both ends of the corridor Kearny intersects with streets which cut through the grid pattern at an angle. This creates a special volume and the special opportunity for architectural richness, and an open space enriched streetscape. Even when these opportunities are missed the space carved out by the change in the geometry provides a notable beginning and end to the corridor.

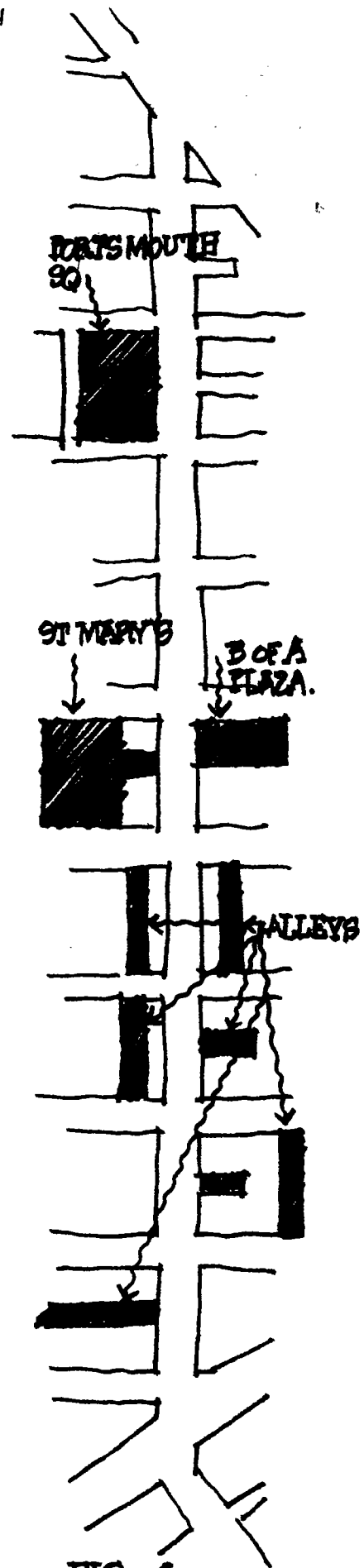


FIG. 4  
OPEN SPACE  
6

## SUB-AREAS

Although the basic impression of Kearny Street is as a major thoroughfare connecting Market and Third Streets with Columbus Avenue and North Beach, the street in fact has four well-established distinguishable sub-areas.

### Sub-Area A

At the north end of Kearny, from Columbus to Sacramento, the street is heavily identified with Chinatown. The basic characteristic is low scale mixed uses punctuated by the Chinatown Holiday Inn and Portsmouth Square.

### Sub-Area B

From Sacramento to Pine, centered around California Street, is a high rise area along Kearny. This area emphasizes the intersection with California and is sufficiently built up to suggest a discrete high rise location on Kearny.

### Sub-Area C

From Pine to Sutter, the street changes radically. The character of this section is one which is most associated with Kearny in the downtown featuring small scale buildings and alleys with varying degrees and potential of public amenity.

### Subarea D

At the foot of Kearny, from Sutter to Market, the street has a somewhat larger scale with emerging high rises on the east and several relatively larger scale historic buildings on the west. This section is the one which exhibits the "downtown" aspect of the street, while maintaining the quality of architecture of the city retail district. Simultaneously it steps down from the financial area on the east to the retail area on the west. The following material details these areas and illustrates the teams concepts for orderly development and protection.

More detailed descriptions are incorporated with sub-area recommendations. 7

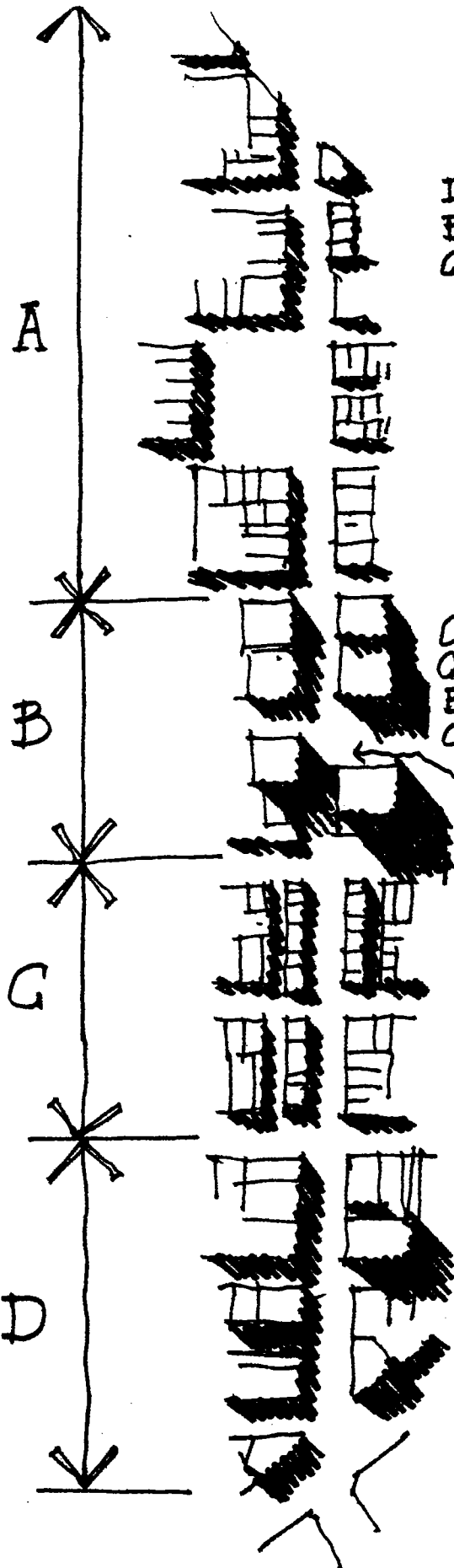
LOW SMALL BLDGS.  
PREDOMINANT  
CHINESE CHARACTER

CALIFORNIA ST.  
CORRIDOR: CLUST-  
ER OF HIGH RISE  
OFFICE BLDGS.  
BOFA PLAZA.

LOW, SMALL  
SCALE BLDGS.

MID SCALE  
COMMERCIAL  
BLDGS. CLUST-  
ER OF HIST-  
ORICAL BLDGS

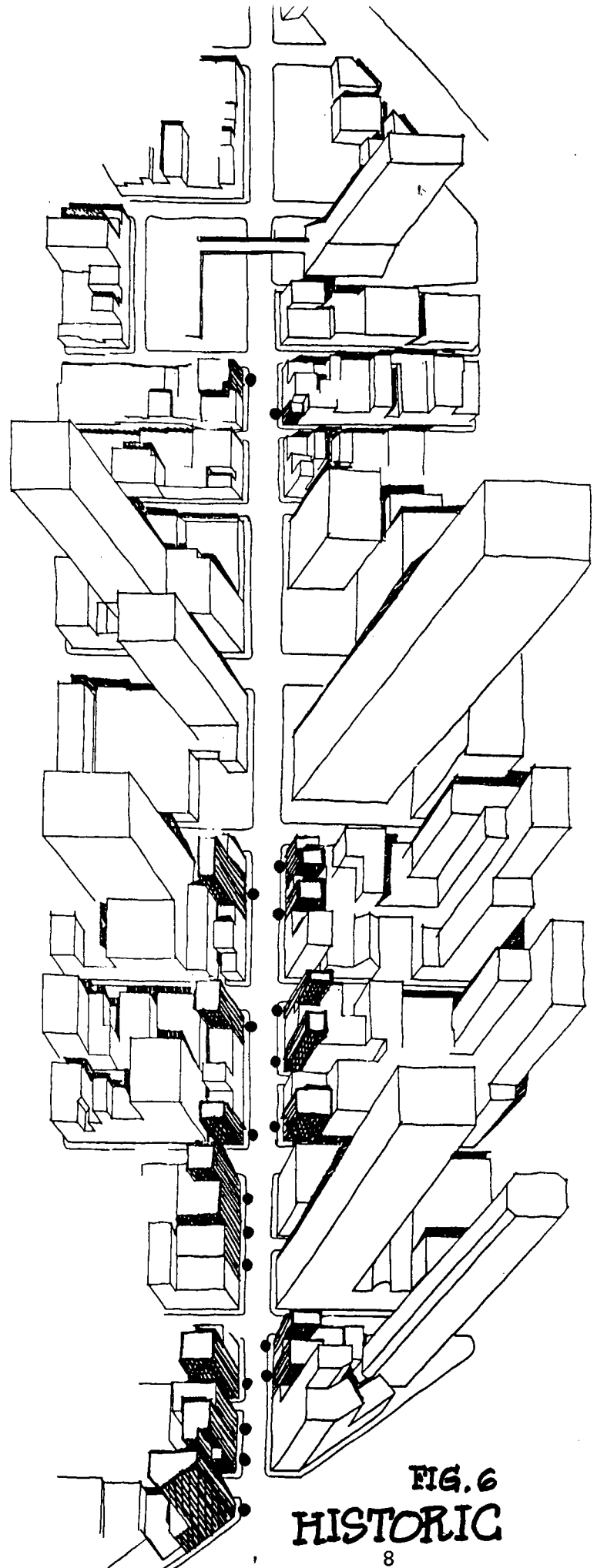
FIG. 5  
SUB AREA MAP





## HISTORIC BUILDINGS

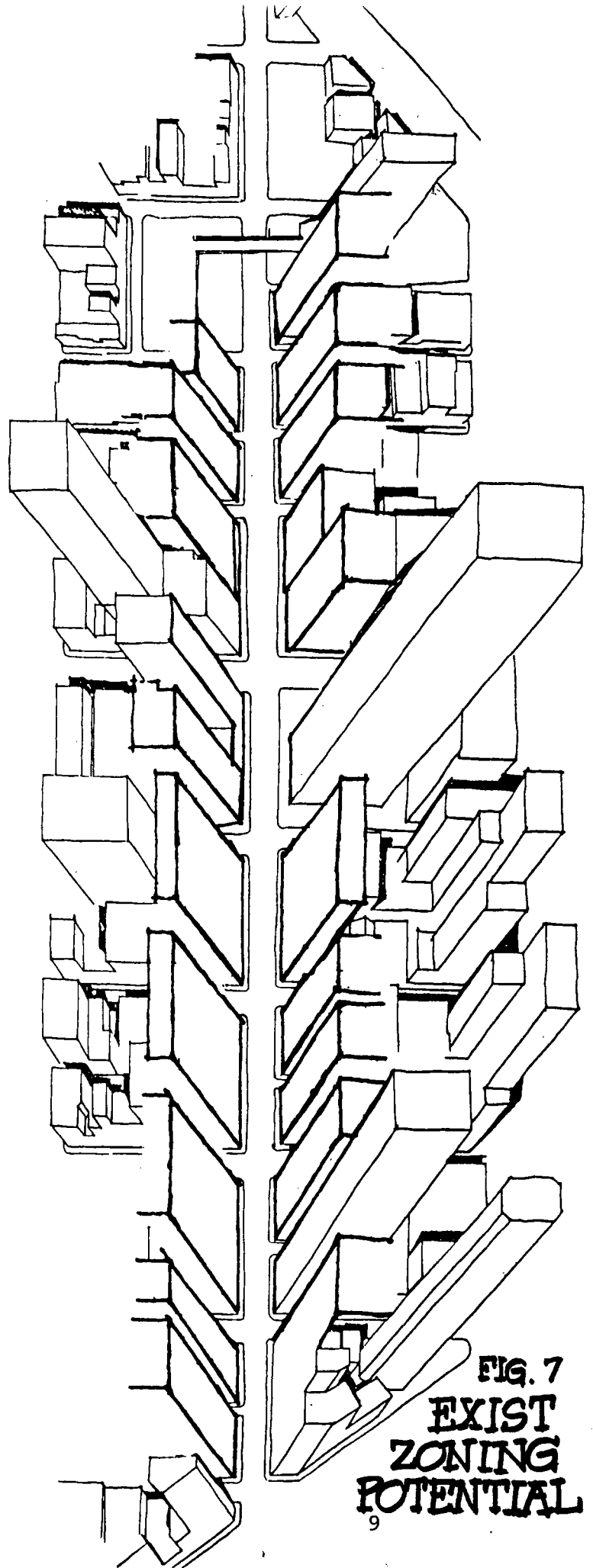
Because Kearny Street is part of early San Francisco, there are numerous buildings of historic significance in the corridor which should be preserved intact. 'Splendid Survivors', a publication of the Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage identifies two "A" (Highest Importance) buildings and approximately twenty B (Major Importance) in the corridor. Most of the remaining older buildings are rated 'C' (Contextual Importance). This study affirms the necessity of preserving these A and B rated buildings and the desirability of retaining the C rated buildings.



**FIG. 6**  
**HISTORIC**

EXISTING ZONING POTENTIAL

The allowable FAR in the Kearny Street Corridor is 14:1, except for the west side of Kearny between Clay and Commercial where the FAR is 10:1. Lot depths are limited by alleys and by adjacent historic buildings on cross streets. Therefore, it will be more difficult for developers to benefit from aggregating property in order to build to the maximum height as well as maximum FAR. Most development using Kearny frontage will probably propose full lot coverage at full FAR. Figure 7 diagrams the result of such development.



**FIG. 7**  
**EXIST**  
**ZONING**  
**POTENTIAL**  
9

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Kearny Street is the seam between the Financial and Retail districts. There are development pressures from both districts which present a set of issues. In addition, the Kearny Street Corridor has its own unique role in downtown San Francisco, not only as a boundary to the two major uses east and west, but as a place which provides sustenance to those who work and live in this part of the City.

Each of the categories below contain both issues and opportunities. The discussion of each is brief and not intended to exhaust the possibilities. What is intended is the creation of a framework of actions which would intensify the sense of place in the Kearny Street Corridor.

### HISTORY

The existing retail stores and offices are housed in groups of buildings constructed shortly after the 1906 earthquake. Several blocks of buildings are virtually intact and provide the opportunity for establishing height limits which will retain the scale and character of old Kearny Street. The groups of buildings are six to eight stories high and in some cases individual buildings have been designated as having most important significance to San Francisco's Architectural Heritage. On Kearny Street particularly it is the groups of buildings which play the important role of providing a unique context downtown.

## ECONOMIC PRESSURES

Present economic trends suggest an increased demand for large office buildings along Kearny Street. There will also be increased demand for more retail space, for new housing and for cultural facilities, but demand for these uses cannot compete economically with demand for large office buildings. In fact the market demand is so intense that forecasts suggest an increase of office space in San Francisco at a rate of 2,000,000 square feet per year. As much as 500,000 square feet per year could occur along Kearny Street during the next period of office construction. Figure 7 shows what would be possible under current zoning.

### SUN

The City Planning Department is preparing sun access regulations which when complete should be incorporated in many areas of this Corridor. However, these regulations are not sufficient to protect the character of Kearny Street, so low height limits are recommended in this report, to supplement the sun access regulations.

## CIRCULATION

Vehicular traffic volumes are very high in the Kearny Street Corridor from Monday through Friday. Volumes are especially high from Market to Sutter, a segment used by many buses to return west across the City. The City has looked at ways to reduce traffic congestion. Several additional transit proposals, including a shopper's shuttle, were reviewed, but none were sufficiently defined to allow judgment about the impact on this or any other part of downtown. What should be stated is that any new transit system would generate an additional set of issues and opportunities to be analyzed.

Pedestrian volumes are also very high from Monday through Friday. Although there is a lot of vehicular traffic, Kearny Street has many attributes which make it an attractive pedestrian street. The Street has a lot of light and air and is lined with businesses which are tuned to personal demands of workers, shoppers and residents. What it does not have at present is an image. Creation of that image is one basis for the recommendations in this report.

## RELATIONSHIP TO CHINATOWN

Development pressures to expand the area for large office buildings has already been noted. If the expansion of high density use expands further west and north, it will inevitably result in greater pressure on Chinatown. The Kearny Street Corridor recommendations support the use of Kearny as a transitional area.

## LACK OF COHESIVE QUALITY

With all the potential embodied in the Kearny Street Corridor, there is a surprising lack of image or cohesive quality. A lot of work of this report went into recommendations for small improvements which can be done incrementally as a public investment.

The recommendations for improved streetscape are aimed at increasing the sense of place on Kearny Street and thereby improving the quality of environment for everyone downtown.

## KEARNY STREET AT NIGHT

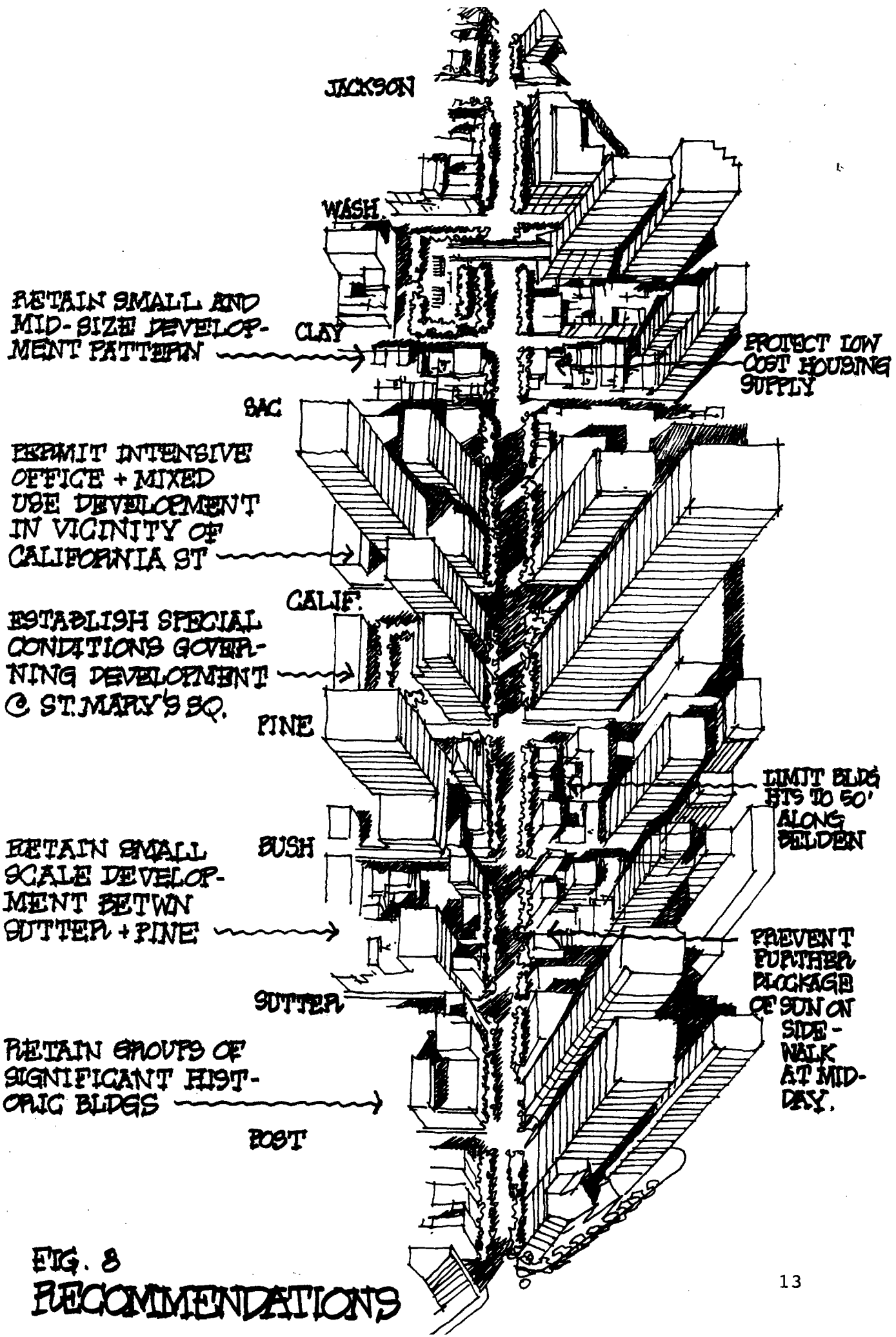
Like much of downtown, the population thins out considerably at night in the Kearny Street Corridor. Issues concerning use after 5 PM tend to include personal safety and security. Though little time was given to these issues in this round of analysis and recommendations, it is obvious that retention of housing and viable restaurants in the area extend the night-time use of the Corridor. Other opportunities should be examined.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for resolving the developmental issues of the Kearny Street Corridor are set forth below. These recommendations are comprised of overall development and conservation objectives and more specific recommendations for future land use, transportation improvements, and physical design requirements and guidelines. These provisions address the unique and highly localized conditions and opportunities of the Corridor and are intended to augment the provision of the forthcoming downtown plan.

### Development and Conservation Policies

- \* Retain and promote continued economic use of all historic buildings classified as 1 and 2 by the San Francisco City Planning Department and as A and B by the Foundation for the Protection of San Francisco's Heritage.
- \* Maintain a scale and design of new structures which are compatible with the historic buildings along Kearny Street, including the C-rated building groups.
- \* Promote mixed use along the length of Kearny Street with special attention given to the retention and reinforcement of pedestrian oriented retail uses at street level.
- \* Protect and reinforce Kearny Street's role as a pedestrian oriented street serving the needs of both shoppers and office workers.
- \* Maintain Kearny Street's function as a major auto, transit route while still enhancing its pedestrian use.
- \* Protect and promote increased public use of parks, plazas, alleyways and other open spaces within or contiguous to the corridor.
- \* Retain optimum sun and sky exposure, for pedestrians, shops, offices and vehicle passengers.
- \* Direct growth of major office development to the South-of-Market and major retailing (i.e., department stores) to the Powell/Stockton corridor.
- \* Recognize and reinforce the unique visual and functional characteristics of the sub-areas which comprise the Kearny Street Corridor.
- \* Retain a supply of low and moderate cost housing and reasonably priced small scale commercial and office space.
- \* Protect and encourage the multi-ethnic diversity of Kearny Street.



RETAIN SMALL AND MID-SIZE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

PROTECT LOW COST HOUSING SUPPLY

PERMIT INTENSIVE OFFICE + MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT IN VICINITY OF CALIFORNIA ST

ESTABLISH SPECIAL CONDITIONS GOVERNING DEVELOPMENT @ ST. MARY'S SQ.

RETAIN SMALL SCALE DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN GUTTER + PINE

RETAIN GROUPS OF SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC BLDGS

LIMIT BLDG HTS TO 50' ALONG BELDEN

PREVENT FURTHER PACKAGING OF SUN ON SIDE-WALK AT MID-DAY.

FIG. 8  
RECOMMENDATIONS

## PROPOSED LAND USE

To retain the vitality of the Kearny Street Corridor and to maintain its unique characteristics, existing land use patterns should be reinforced. The proposed land use policy, consequently, is intended to strengthen rather than alter current conditions.

As noted in Figure 9, in Sub-Area A, (the Chinatown portion of the corridor) lower level retail/restaurant usage, coupled with upper level housing and low density office/repair shop space would be retained. Banking facilities in this portion should be discouraged.

Sub-Area B, (the zone of separation between Chinatown and the remainder of the corridor) would include high density office or, possibly, mixed use (hotel/office/retail/housing). Such mixed use could also include a museum extension. This high density usage would further enhance the current distinction between zone A and Zone C.

In Sub-Area C, the special character of "through block" retail, and lower level retail along the adjacent alleys, coupled with low density mixed usage above would be maintained.

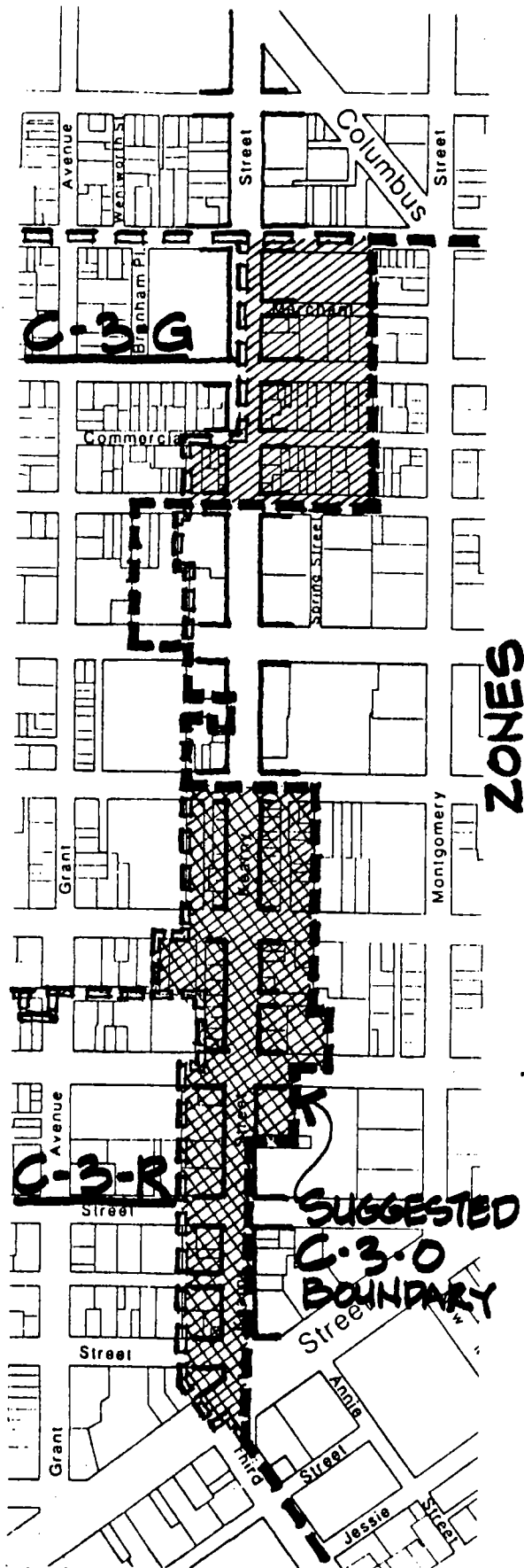
In Sub-Area D, the transition to high density office with minimum lower level retail usage from a pattern comparable to that in Zone C has already occurred along the east side of the corridor. This condition would be contained to the east side. Permitting usage on the west side to continue to be retail dominant.

Because this proposal (and the existing land use pattern) is different from the current City Planning Zoning boundaries, it is recommended that the boundary between the C30, C3R, and C3G districts be adjusted to conform to existing

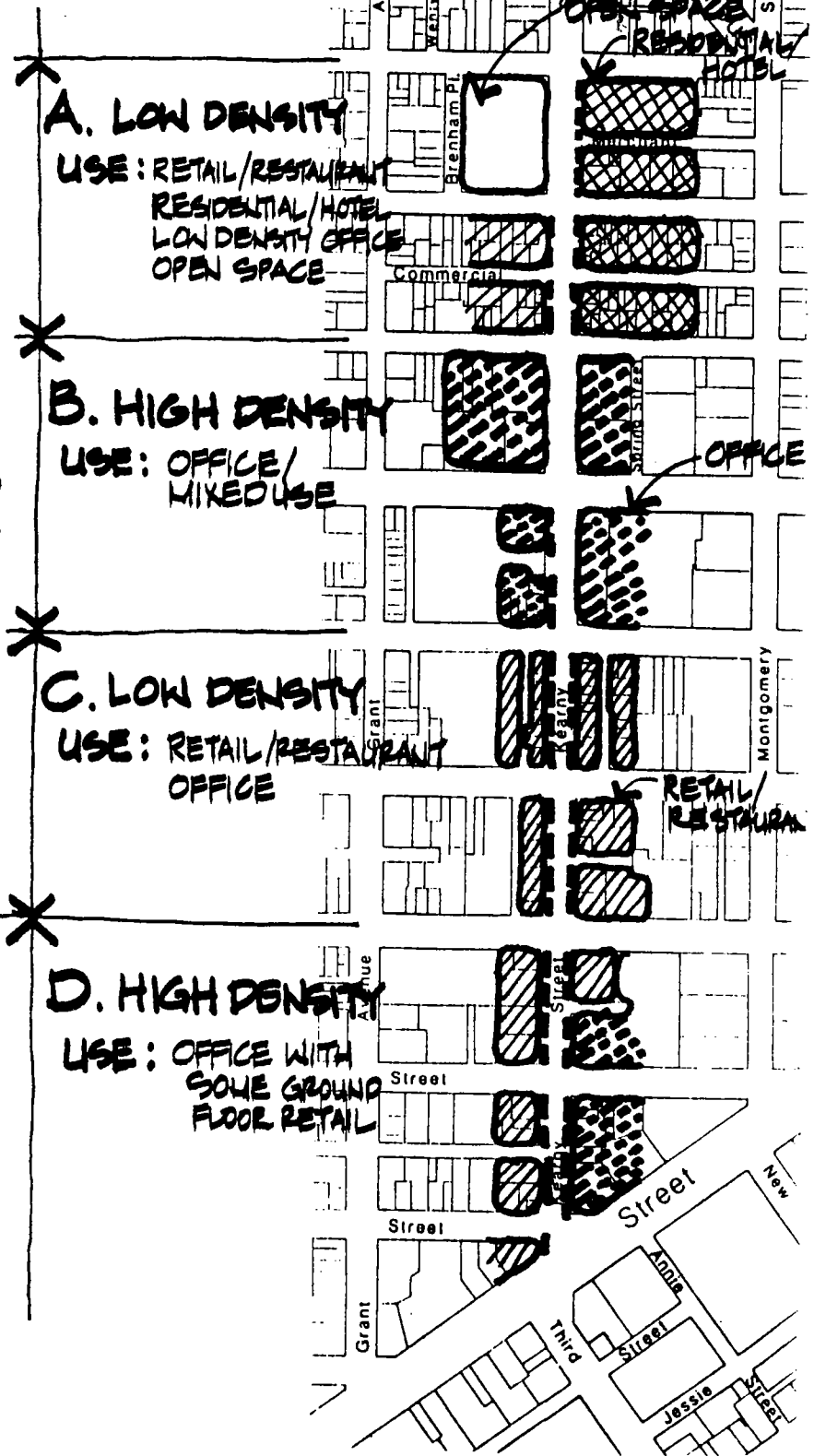
patterns, as indicated in Figure 9. This adjustment would permit the continuity of the Kearny Street corridor's role as the border between the different land uses.

## PHYSICAL DESIGN

After analysis of the corridor, the UDAT makes the following recommendations for preservation of historic buildings, height of street wall, improvements in the streetscape, guidelines for St. Mary's Square, for facade restoration, and building renovation.



**FIG. 9  
PROPOSED  
ZONING CHANGES**



**PROPOSED  
LAND USE**



SUB-AREA A  
SACRAMENTO TO WASHINGTON

This section of the Kearny Street Corridor is the entrance to the City's Chinatown from Downtown. Shortly after passing Sacramento Street one sees the pedestrian bridge linking Portsmouth Square, Chinatown's major open space with the Chinese Cultural Center located in the Holiday Inn Hotel. Beyond, Telegraph Hill rises sharply, atop which one can see Coit Tower, an important city-wide landmark. Portsmouth Square slopes downward towards Kearny from the west making its landscape a noticeable part of the street scene.

The scale of development diminishes quickly north of Sacramento Street, the only high rise being the Holiday Inn. The buildings facing Kearny reflect Chinatown's unique cultural identity and the wide diversity of uses found elsewhere in the area. In general, at street level there are retail shops, grocery stores, restaurants and service establishments. Residences occupy the upper floors including units for families with children. Approximately 250 housing units are located in the block between Sacramento and Clay, east of Kearny. Residents and tourists, non-Chinese and Chinese alike all are served by these facilities. Local Chinese as well as those from beyond in the region depend on Chinatown to satisfy many of their cultural and ethnic needs.

The vacant site between Washington and Jackson on the east side of Kearny was formerly the location of the International Hotel, a residence for low income, single, predominantly Asian men. The City is committed to providing equivalent new housing on the site above retail development and parking as part of a mixed use project including market rate housing and office uses on the eastern portion of the same block.

PROPOSAL

It is almost axiomatic that Chinatown and its special character be preserved. Yet physical and social conditions must also be vastly improved for those who actually live and work there. Large scale redevelopment is unlikely to preserve the context and character of the area. We, therefore, recommend a moderate approach to the preservation and improvement of the portions of Chinatown abutting Kearny Street as follows:

Zoning

C-3-G zoning on both sides of the Kearny Street corridor as indicated on Figure 9. Because the allowable F.A.R. is proposed to be lowered, we believe further pressure to develop high intensity offices and hotels will be lessened.

Height Limits

Lower height limits to 50 and 120 feet as illustrated on Figure 16 to protect solar access to Portsmouth Square. If applied in conjunction with a system of sun access planes for the downtown this control would provide a solar "fan" which would keep development low enough to allow sun into the square and maintain existing scale.

Cultural Facilities

Allow open space requirements to be met by provision of or contribution to a cultural facility to promote and enhance cultural development.

SUB-AREA B  
PINE TO SACRAMENTO

The group recommends few changes in this area because the recent and proposed development will determine the character of this area for the foreseeable future. Heights would be adjusted as shown on Figure 16. Specific guidelines for the two developable parcels are recommended as follows.

PROPOSAL  
Pine/Kearny Parcel

Development on this site presents a unique opportunity to expand the open space of St. Mary's Square to Kearny Street in the following manner. Assuming a need to make use of air rights above the publicly owned park to gain additional F.A.R., these rights could be exchanged in returned for certain amenities. The park could be extended through, down and under a new building to Kearny Street in the form of a water course or landscaped passageway, focussing on the Bank of America Plaza across the street to the east and to the corner of Pine and Kearny. This would establish visual connection of these two open spaces, increase the size of the St. Mary's Square, and increase the potential for public access and use. Developers could also be required to rebuild the Kearny Street entry to St. Mary's Garage to improve pedestrian safety and to provide landscaping on the garage, now barren.

The maximum height of the new building should be kept low enough to be within or below the shadow cast by the B of A. For example, the roof might be terraced so as to conform to the solar access plane.

Sacramento/Kearny Parcel

Although social needs such as housing for low and moderate income families in Chinatown are an extremely high priority, the probable site cost, market conditions and lack of subsidies seem to indicate that higher revenue-producing uses such as office or mixed use development is more likely to happen. Nevertheless the street level retail should be oriented to the Chinatown market.

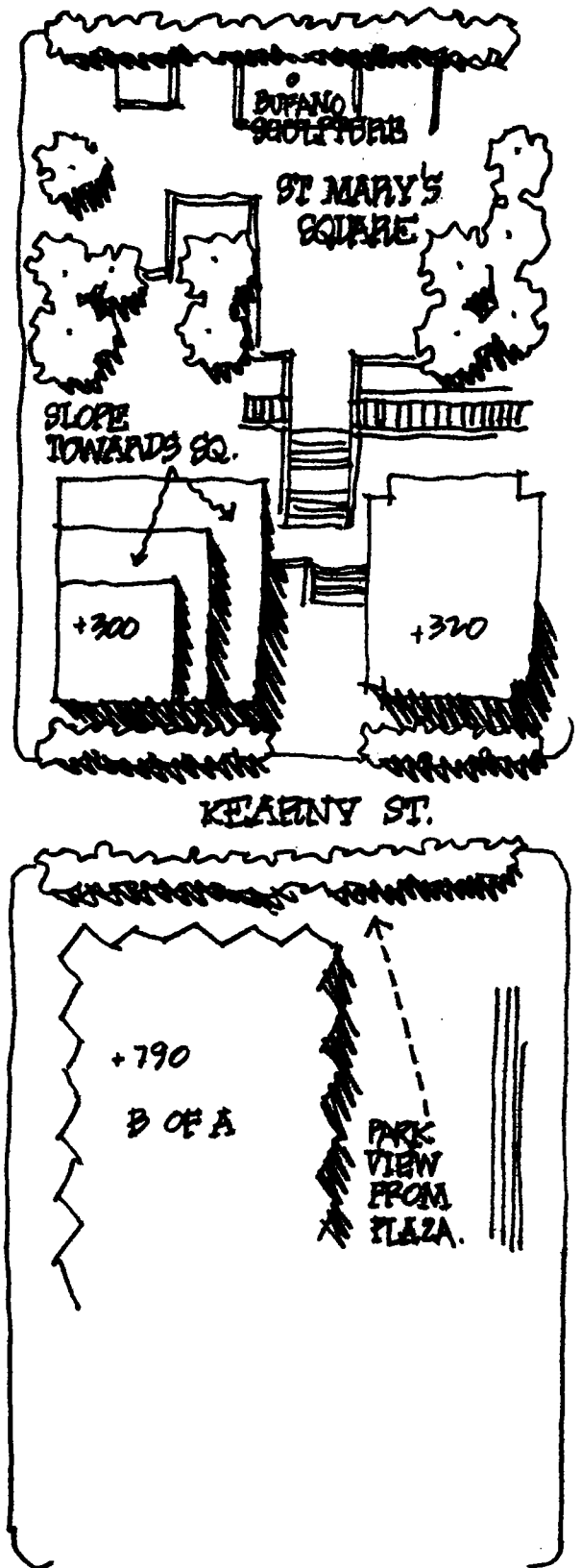


FIG 10  
ST. MARY'S SQ.

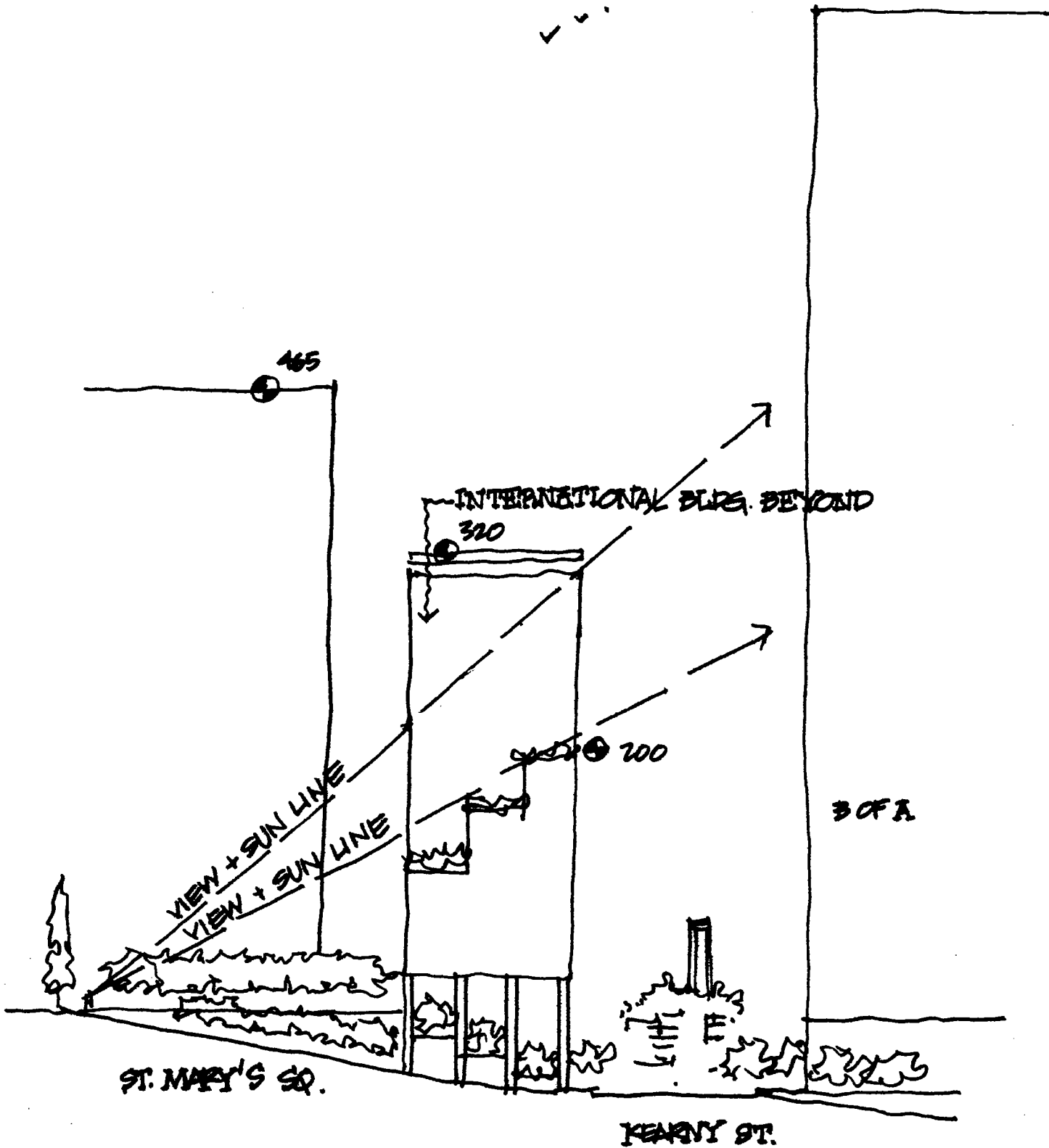


FIG. 11  
ST. MARY'S SQ.

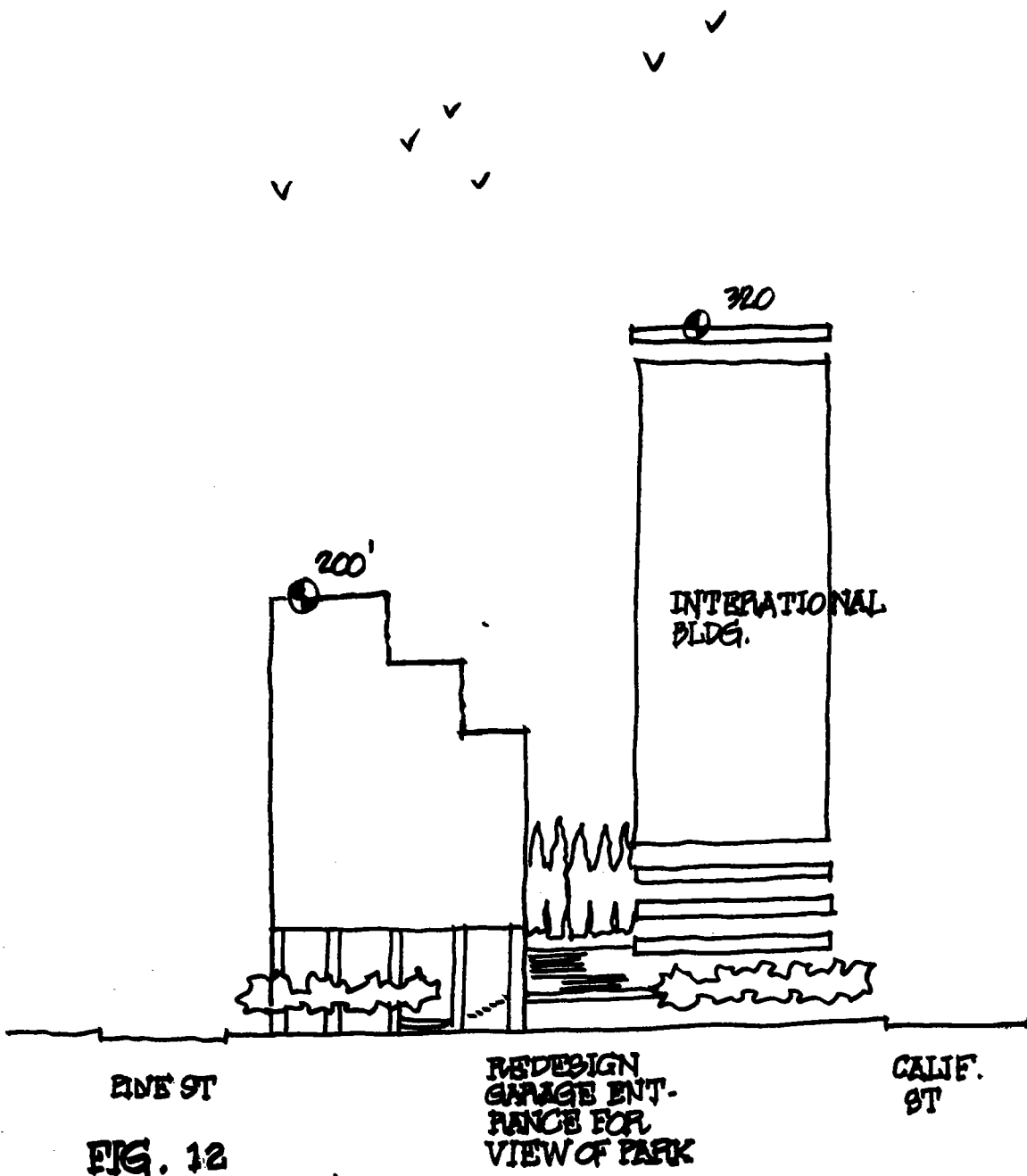


FIG. 12  
ST. MARY'S SQ.

## SUB-AREA C

### SUTTER TO PINE

These two blocks reflect the historic origins of Kearny Street which dates from 1847 when it ended the route from the south to the old San Francisco waterfront near Portsmouth Square. The small scale retail buildings which flank both sides of the street include many built just after the turn of the century. The narrow alleys at their rear are vestiges of an earlier street pattern then prevalent throughout the downtown. Belden, the alley between Pine and Bush east of Kearny is lined with eating places and is a sunny pedestrian area popular during the work day because the low building heights allow penetration of the sunlight.

The buildings are shallow in depth, typically being less than 60 feet. Narrow street facades contribute further to the small scale and contrast sharply with the Bank of America and its neighbors to the north. The frontages are continuous with no setbacks or breaks, except for the east-west alley, Hardie Place, between Sutter and Bush on the east side of Kearny.

The architecture of these buildings is the solid commercial style of the early 20th century, with windows often surprisingly large to allow maximum light penetration. Most of these are double hung sash, and set in masonry exterior walls produce sharp shadows and textures. The overall effect is one of varied styles despite similar mass and detailing under layers of storefront "modernization".

This cluster of low-rise buildings opens the corridor to more sunlight, acting as an open space would amidst tall buildings. Added to the sub-area's architectural and historic qualities this feature justifies a recommendation for preservation. The following measures are suggested as equitable means by which the city might implement such a policy without actually declaring it an historic district.

## PROPOSALS Height Limits

Presently the allowable height limits vary from 320' to 500'. Lower limits are being studied by the Department of City Planning. We recommend a limit of 50', more nearly the height of the existing buildings, backing up to higher districts consistent with sun access requirement. Preliminary analysis of the City's Solar Access Control system indicates that its application would not alone prevent the type of development in height which would destroy this sub-area's character. Therefore a fixed height limit is recommended.

### Guidelines for Change

Existing signage and storefront renovations from the past obscure the original facades and demean the historic architectural quality of many of the buildings in this subarea. New signs and facade improvements which would restore the frontages to their original architectural character should be encouraged.

### Visible Alterations and New Construction

When major alterations which can be seen from the street are necessary those which tend to restore the buildings to their original massing, proportions, scale, or appearance are to be encouraged. So-called modernizations which result in the loss or obliteration of historic architectural detail are to be discouraged. Totally new construction need not be in an historic style, but if it is it should be accurate and authentic in its details. If not in an historic style, then the placement and proportion of wall openings, and the materials and colors of the facades should be visually compatible with adjacent buildings. Guidelines for architectural design are shown on Figure 13.



FIG. 13

SUB-AREA D  
MARKET TO SUTTER

Sub-Area D, from Market to Sutter Streets has been heavily affected by the recent office development boom. The just constructed Crocker Center, which places a 497 foot tall tower on the northeast corner of Kearny and Post Streets has had a significant impact upon the solar access and scale of lower Kearny Street. The proposed San Francisco Federal headquarters on the southeast corner of Kearny and Post will have a similar effect upon Kearny Street and will also affect the solar access of Maiden Lane in the morning. These two developments will determine the character of the east side of Kearny Street in the foreseeable future.

In contrast to the east side, the west side of Kearny Street retains the character and scale of the Post-Fire San Francisco retail district. Eight out of ten structures on the west side of Subarea 1 are rated A or B by the Foundation For San Francisco's Architectural Heritage and the City Planning Department is recommending that these buildings should be either preserved intact or with minimal alterations. Transferrable development rights will be allowed for these buildings.

These buildings range in height from 52 to 160 feet, with an approximate street wall height of 80 feet. The buildings take the form of ground floor service retail with offices or retail uses above. There are a variety of restaurants and many of the city's photography stores are

located in this section. Maiden Lane, a heavily used pedestrian corridor, enters the Sub-area from the west between Sutter and Post. Maiden Lane is closed off to serve as a pedestrian mall at lunch time and functions as a mixed pedestrian/service mall at other times.

PROPOSALS  
Height and Zoning

To accomplish this the group recommends that Sub-Area D be preserved largely intact. The C-3-0/C-3-R boundary will run down Kearny Street in Sub-Area D. Height limits would remain at 120 feet on developable parcels, compatible with the effective height limit of the historic buildings which will be preserved. (See figure 16.) This would ensure the preservation of the intimate scale and fine grain quality of the west side of Kearny Street. The height limit corresponds to the street wall height determined by solar access requirements.

ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

New buildings must be built to the street property line and respect the height limit. The new development must respect adjacent structures by use of similar and compatible materials, fenestration, cornices, belt courses, decoration, use (i.e. retail ground floor) and existing building width.

## STREETSCAPE

1. Paving of Sidewalks:  
Standard city detail for concrete sidewalks. Color to be black with grit added for non-slip surface and night-time sparkle. Use same specification as Crocker Center sidewalks and curbs.
2. Street Lighting:  
Use the historic fixture with decorative metal work and two light fixtures per pole. These fixtures already exist between Market Street and Bush. Use the same spacing throughout the street. Repaint to match fixtures on post Street side of Crocker Center.
3. Street Trees:  
Will occur from Market Street to Post Street. Will start again at Pine Street and extend to Columbus Avenue. Variety suggested is tree used on Kearny Street side of Bank of America, the New Zealand Christmas Tree, *Metrociderous Tomentosa*. Use same tree grate and guard detail as at Bank of America.
4. Litter Units/Sidewalks:  
Square unit similar to the city's 1980 standard except sides to be black California granite, 2 inches thick, corners are to be quirk miter's. Top shall be heavy duty black anodized aluminum.
5. Dempsey Dumpster Litter Units:  
Shall be located in screened, off-street loading areas for all new construction. Where located in older buildings which do not have services recesses they shall be screened from view and gated. Screening shall be heavy duty and attractive and shall be 4 inches higher than Dumpster unit.

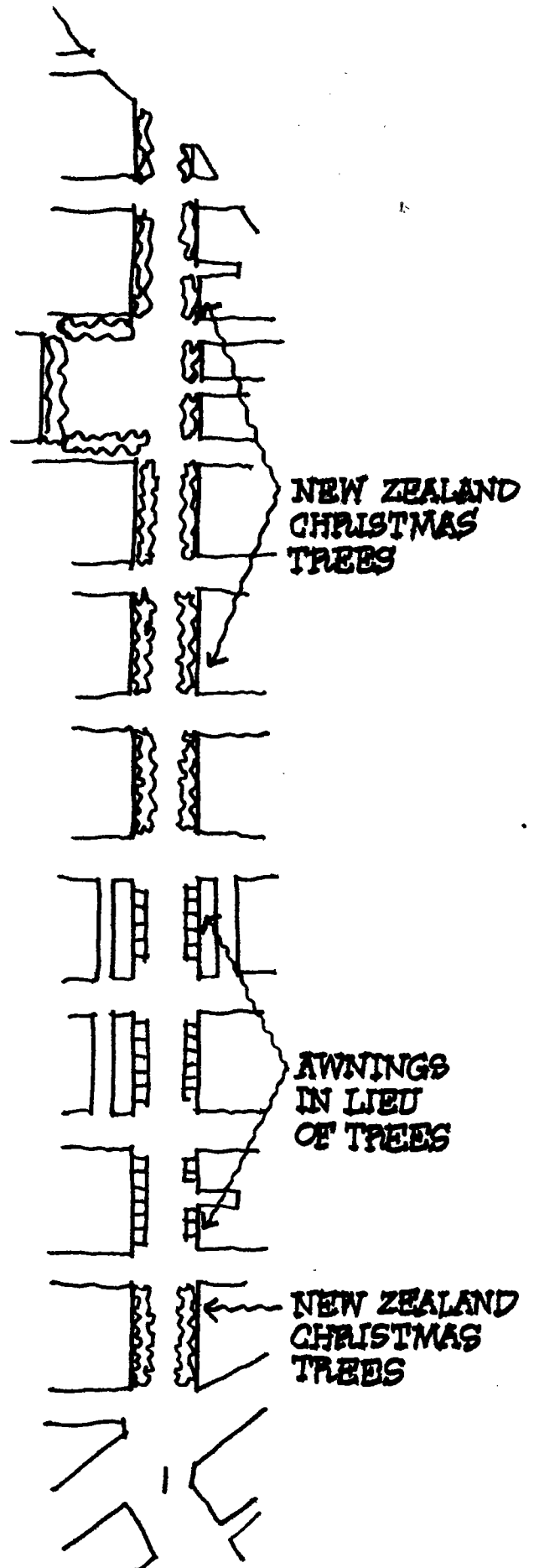
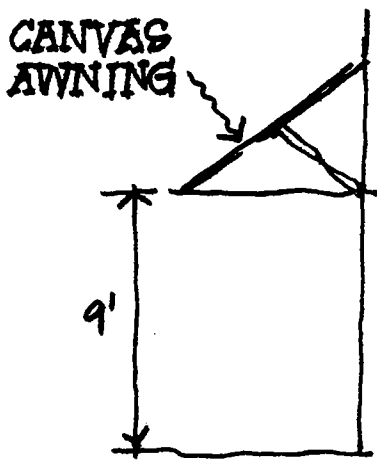
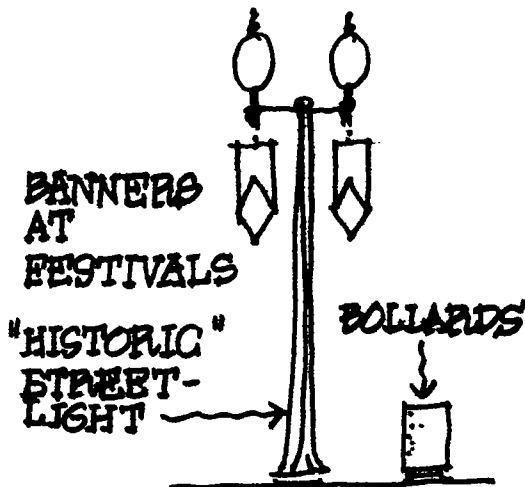
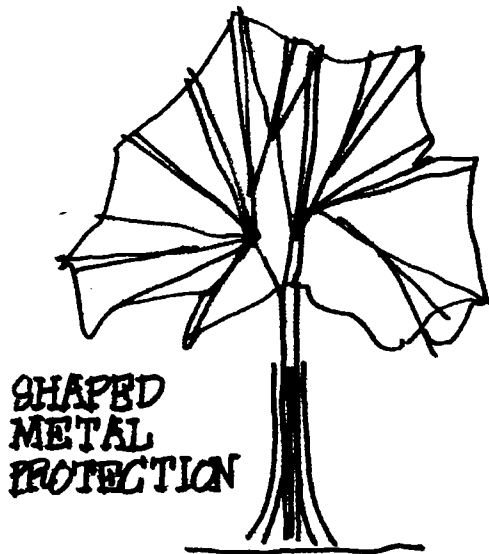


FIG. 14  
STREETSCAPE





**FIG. 15  
STREETSCAPE  
ELEMENTS**

6. **Parking Meters:**  
Study possibility of combining meter with handsome bollard, 10" diameter, black metal, black granite or precast concrete to serve both as a revenue collector and as a decorative bollard to separate street and sidewalk uses.
7. **Canvas Awnings:**  
Many exist and their use seems desirable above windows of retail space for rain protection and visual interest. Awnings should be cantilevered from the building wall and not supported by posts located on the sidewalks. They should not extend more than 7' out from the face of the building. Minimum height above sidewalk at lowest point shall be 9'. They should either angle or curve out from the building wall & their main surface should not be set parallel to the building face. Letters should not be more than 8" high and preferably there should be no lettering. Awnings should not be used as billboards or as building signs.
8. **Handicapped Ramps at Intersections:**  
Preferably the entire corner should be ramped to meet the crosswalks to minimize the hazard of tripping on the tapering slope areas. Present city standard is two narrow ramps at each corner, one for each crosswalk.
9. **Sidewalk Parking Signage:**  
Double posts should not be used as they occupy too much sidewalk space. Signs should be mounted on a single post-similar in detail to the most recent Muni bus stop signs.
10. **Existing Parks & Plazas:**  
Alleys, small streets & connecting spaces to public squares should be enhanced as semi-mall areas primarily oriented to pedestrians. The vistas of parks and monuments should be accented.

## LANDMARK OPPORTUNITIES

1. Maiden Lane  
Connector to Union Square has vista of Dewey Monument with St. Francis Hotel as backdrop.
2. Crocker Center  
Kearny Alley is reasonably attractive and has view of Galleria roof.
3. Hardie Place  
Needs screening of litter units.
4. Belden  
Parallels Kearny and is an interesting contrast to scale of Bank of America building. Noontime sunlight is very important to this space.
5. St. George  
Parallels Kearny to the west
6. Commercial Street  
Has long vista to the tower of the Ferry Building. As a minimum these spaces should be well maintained and free of unscreened litter units. Desirably they should have handsome street furnishings, attractive pavement and plantings.

## OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

1. Bank of America Plaza which has an opportunity to develop a new vista towards St. Mary's Square if the present garage entrance were redesigned in connection with a proposed new building at northwestern corner of Pine and Kearny Streets.
2. St. Mary's Square needs refurbishing, better handling of litter and restrooms and a new connection to Kearny Street.
3. Portsmouth Square needs improvement of landscaping and garage entrance on Kearny Street so the street is more enhanced by the open space.

## HEIGHT DISTRICTS

New height districts are being evaluated by the City Planning Department for the C-3 zoning districts. Figure 9 shows height districts recommended.

The heights of Landmark Quality Buildings, which will be protected through TDR, establish an existing height for much of the corridor. The existing building heights, in effect, comprise the allowable height and a numerical designation is not recommended here..

For the rest of the area, the policies of maintaining compatibility with the landmark quality buildings, of reinforcing retail use, of protecting existing sun access to the street, of directing high intensity development south of Market, of creating a transitional area between the Financial District and the Union Square Retail District, of retaining historical qualities within the district, of keeping low and medium cost housing and business, of protecting the traffic flow on Kearny, and of making increased use of the pedestrian network of alleys are the basis of the recommended height districts.

In the subarea from Market to Sutter there is a preponderance of historic landmarks. This is the area most immediately related to and extending to the major retail district. For new development the height district is 120' with setbacks in accordance with sun access criteria.

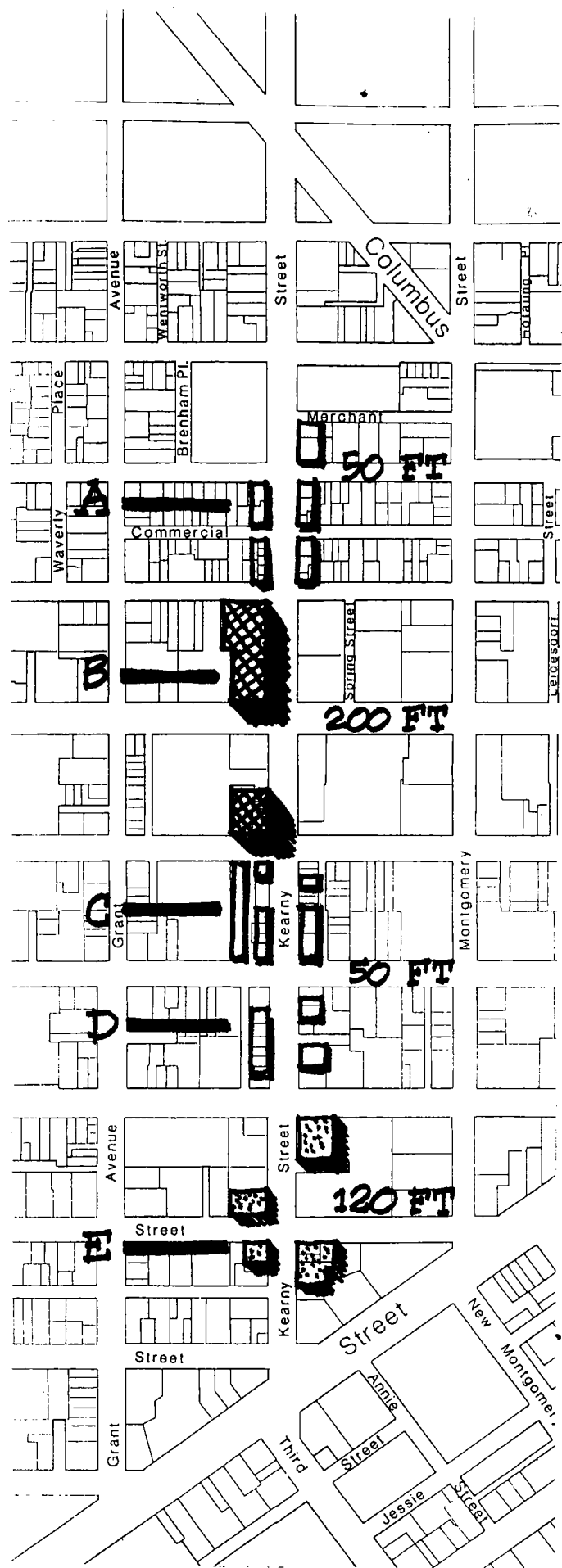
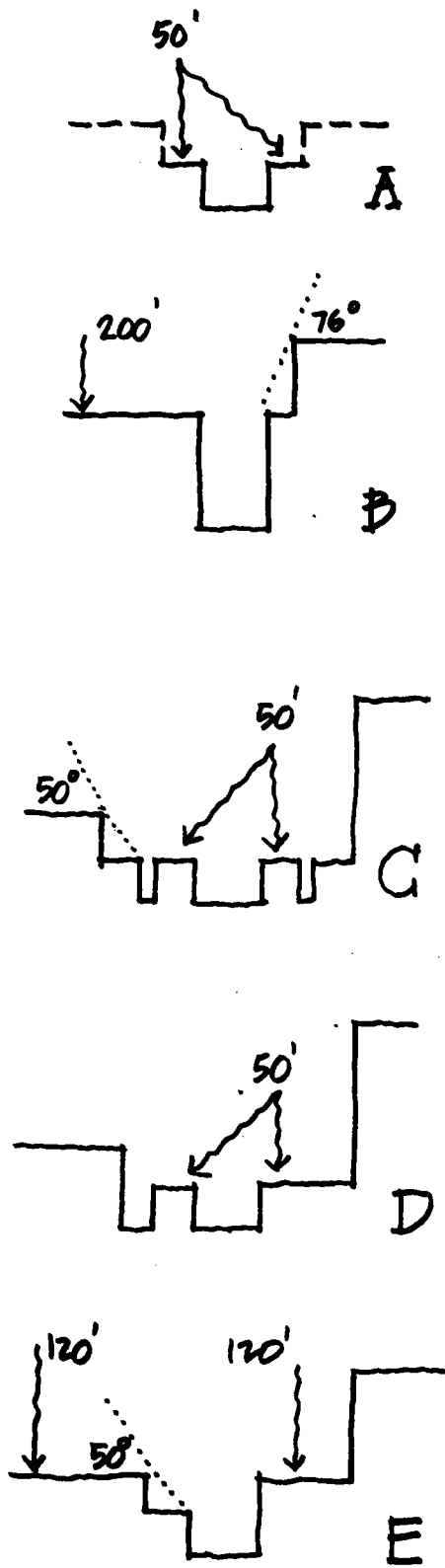
In the sub-area from Sutter to Pine the properties between the alleys and the street are of shallow depth. They would be difficult to develop. Here, in order to protect sun access to the alleys as well as the street, to retain the historical scale of the precinct, to retain existing residential and business

uses, and to provide for a variety of size and scale in the area, the height district is 50 feet. The buildings here are not significant enough for landmarks designation but they are considered by the Heritage study to be of contextual value, and together with the landmark quality buildings comprise an historical area worth maintaining. The height district will allow additions of penthouses and extra floors.

The sub-area from Pine to Sacramento has the highrise towers along California Street. There are only two parcels with obvious development potential remaining. Except for the impairment of sun access to St. Mary's Square, which would result from unconstrained construction at the northwest corner of Pine and Kearny, high intensity of development is consistent within this area. Therefore a 200' height district is recommended, provided there are site specific guidelines for maintaining maximum sun access to Kearny Street and the park, and pedestrian access to the park from Kearny Street.

An option for this would be to increase St. Mary's Square park along Pine Street to Kearny Street to provide maximum sun access and pedestrian access to the park, and provide an equivalent area on California Street for development of an office tower with a California Street address.

The sub-area from Sacramento to Washington returns to the small scale of the historic Kearny Corridor. Including Portsmouth Square Park, this area is an extension of Chinatown. To protect sun access to the park, to retain the housing and small business uses, to maintain the historic quality of Chinatown, a 50' height district is recommended for the parcels facing Kearny Street. The parcels behind should be step up to the height district for the adjacent areas.



**FIG. 16.**  
**HEIGHT**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Urban Design Assistance Team was organized by the Urban Design Committee of the San Francisco Chapter AIA.

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The work was done in the office of Crosby-Thornton-Marshall Associates February, 1983.