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DAY OF HEARING SUBMISSIONS



alan nakagawa

06-16-2020

Dear LTHS members, friends and supporters,

In 2019, the LTHS applied for a City of Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument designation for the Sakai-Kozawa Residence / Tokio Florist and Pole Sign at 2718 Hyperion Ave in Silver Lake. Tokio Florist reflects a time when flower fields, citrus groves and orchards blanketed the Los Angeles Basin. It represents the contributions that Japanese Americans made in the agriculture and floriculture industries in Southern California. Tokio Florist also underscores the entrepreneurial might of women. The Sakai-Kozawa family moved into the house in 1960 and continued to operate their business on the property, as well. Over the years, the family added an addition to the front porch (where plants were displayed and customers would ultimately select and pay for their purchases). They also added on to the Porte-Cochere over the driveway, which doubled as Sumi Kozawa's floral workshop. This is where she created her floral arrangements. Finally, they also built a greenhouse just behind the house. All of these elements were important to the business and equally integral to the customer experience. (see attachment #1 for owner's diagram of the structures that are planned for removal).

While the house is an example of Tudor-Craftsman architecture and designed by noted architects, it's not why we nominated the house. Instead, the significance of Tokio Florist to the cultural landscape of Los Angeles and the markers on the property that read as a cut flower retail business, made it worthy of a historic cultural monument designation.

We understand that the Kozawa family did not apply for permits for these structures, yet they were determined to be character-defining features in the HCM nomination. It's true that the owner/developer is faced with a huge challenge since these structures were constructed from ephemeral materials and are in some disrepair. Yet, if these structures are scraped from the property, the markings of the Tokio Florist business will be erased.

The owner/developer has included the three co-authors of the HCM nomination, Rosalind Sagara (LA Conservancy & APIAHiP), Catherine Gudis (UCR Associate Professor of History and Silver Lake Resident), and myself in discussions about development on the property, which has been much appreciated. Given the impasse that we are at, however, we will be taking the issue before the Cultural Heritage Commission on Thursday, June 18.

Alan Nakagawa, Artist

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Connect Create Collaborate

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Sakai-Kozawa Residence / Tokio Florist and Pole Sign at 2718 Hyperion Avenue, Los Angeles

1 message

Little Tokyo Historical Society LTHS <littletokyohs@gmail.com> Mon, Jun 15, 2020 at 5:19 PM
To: chc@lacity.org

June 14, 2020

Chairperson - Cultural Heritage Commission
Department of City Planning
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street, Room 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

From: Ernest and Elaine Nagamatsu
2035 Kenilworth Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90039
Re: Planning and the historical Sakai-Kozawa/ Tokio Florist site

Dear Chairperson, Cultural Heritage Commission

I am a long time resident of Silverlake, since 1975, living on Kenilworth Ave. I have always been overly proud of Silverlake and it's significant stake in L.A. architecture and history.
If in fact the "Sakai-Kozawa, Tokio Florist" site is lost in future planning, we will have lost much more than a physical site that will be lost for generations. For Japanese Americans, Tokio Florist made us all so proud as a Japanese Americans. It has been a small beam of success, following the tangled tortuous emotional challenge following WW II. From physical and monetary huge losses, Tokio Florist, the J-A Flower Market, legions of J-A Gardeners, and J-A flower growers emerged from and devastated landscape of broken dreams, to make us all proud once again. Tokio Florist was one of our emotional historical Talismans for generations and I came from an agricultural farm in O.C.

You cannot look away at this critical juncture and I cannot look away. Silverlake was always much more than the sum of its parts and as a community. It has always been more than the iconic architectural landmarks. For just as strong were the bungalows and cultural landmarks. Losing this historical site would be a significant loss to the Japanese American Community, but also to the Community at Large. I will not look away as at my dental office in Los Feliz, I proudly had a floor to ceiling historical mural of L.A. Architecture. One ceiling had full mural of the Schindler House on Kenilworth Ave.

I cannot look away, as each day going to our office and leaving our Kenilworth house, I would pass by Tokio Florist site and think also of Danny Sakai, an iconic Pre

WW II Dry Lakes racer that had dreams dashed away. We cannot let this site that was and inspiration and cornerstone to the many other J-A Flower Shops in Southern California… representing the aura of traditional Ikebana grace and elegance that we see today with top end Florists in L.A. We grew some flowers for our Vegetable Stand and my mother and I took Ikenobu Ikebana flower lessons. The Tokio Florist, presenting of flower arrangements with influence of the Japanese floral balance, exhibited grace and beauty …never showing the backstory of the spinning vortex of anxiety during WW II… not knowing if their lives could be rebuilt again.

You cannot look away nor will I, as this historical Sakai-Kozawa site is an emotional Talisman for us just as the J-A Flower Market and Japanese American Flower Growers in Southern California. Remember in making a decision on this very important matter, for me I sincerely thought of iconic Danny Sakai and Tokio Florist on my route to my Los Feliz office. Silverlake has been more than the sum of its parts having a sense of community and respect for history… now is not the time to waiver or disconnect our special heritage. Silverlake has been “My Silverlake” and I sincerely hope that the Commission feels the same regarding the importance of preserving our Japanese American “Talisman’ of inspiration for others to remember. The Japanese American in Post WW II did not lock arms, but locked hearts, seeking inspiration from others to succeed in any way possible with grace and dignity. The Sakai-Kozawa, Tokio Florist was a living example for so many of us…it is close to my heart. You cannot look away… and I will not look away. Thank you for your time and consideration in this key matter.

Ernest and Elaine Nagamatsu
2035 Kenilworth Ave
Los Angeles CA 90039

June 16, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission
Department of City Planning
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street, Room 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

I am deeply concerned after learning that the new owner of the former Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist and Pole Sign (City of LA Historical Cultural Monument #1198) intends to demolish structures on the property that the Kozawa family constructed to facilitate their Tokio Florist business. These structures, which were determined character-defining features in the historic cultural monument nomination, are tangible markers that convey the significance of the property.

The historic cultural monument nomination centered on the cultural significance of the property as a rare example of the floriculture and cut flower industries in Los Angeles, which were integral to the region's commercial and early industrial development. From 1960 to 2006, this site was the long-time location of Tokio Florist as well as the residence of proprietors Yuki Sakai, her daughter Sumi (Sakai) Kozawa and son-in-law Frank Kozawa. The buildings and components on this site related to flower growing remain intact in a neighborhood of northeastern Los Angeles where flower stands and nurseries once dominated the landscape.

The long history of Tokio Florist, which operated at this property for decades, anchors several integral themes to Los Angeles's past. It is exemplary of a multigenerational Japanese American residence and family-owned and operated floral business. It also reflects the contributions of Japanese Angelenos to agriculture and horticulture. Moreover, the history of Tokio Florist highlights the entrepreneurial might of women. If these structures, which illustrate the historical significance of Tokio Florist are razed, this layer of history will be erased. There are creative ways of rethinking how to incorporate these structures into the design of the site.

I hope you share my appreciation for the ways in which these site specific structures reflect the history of Tokio Florist. This place symbolizes my history and those of the Japanese American community here in Los Angeles. Please urge the current owners to think creatively about how to tangibly express and honor this layer of history in a meaningful way. I hope, too, that you will thank them for reaching out to community stakeholders and reiterate the importance of continuing to engage all of us who care deeply about this history.

Sincerely,



Ann Kaneko
Filmmaker and artist
LA Council District 11

Ann Kaneko / 12323 Culver Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90066 USA
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Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist

1 message

Judith Teitelman <jtconsult@sbcglobal.net> Mon, Jun 15, 2020 at 4:31 PM
To: chc@lacity.org
Cc: cd4.issues@lacity.org, littletokyohs@gmail.com

Cultural Heritage Commission

Department of City Planning / City of Los Angeles

200 North Spring Street, Room 272

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

As a longtime resident of Los Feliz, I'm writing to express my concern after learning that the new owner of the former Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist and Pole Sign (City of LA Historical Cultural Monument #1198) intends to demolish structures on the property that the Kozawa family constructed to facilitate their Tokio Florist business. These structures, confirmed character-defining features in the historic cultural monument nomination, are tangible markers that convey the significance of the property.

The historic cultural monument nomination centered on the cultural significance of the property as a rare example of the floriculture and cut flower industries in Los Angeles, which were integral to the region's commercial and early industrial development. From 1960 to 2006, this site was the location of Tokio Florist. It was also the residence of proprietors Yuki Sakai, her daughter Sumi (Sakai) Kozawa and son-in-law Frank Kozawa. The buildings and components on this site related to flower growing remain intact in a neighborhood of northeastern Los Angeles where flower stands and nurseries once dominated the landscape. The long history of Tokio Florist, operated at this property for decades, anchors several integral themes to Los Angeles's past. It is exemplary of a multigenerational Japanese American residence and family-owned and operated floral business. In addition, it reflects the contributions of Japanese Angelenos to agriculture and horticulture. Significantly, the history of Tokio Florist highlights the entrepreneurial might of women. If these structures, which illustrate the historical significance of Tokio Florist are razed, this layer of history will be erased.

Please urge the current owners to think creatively about how to tangibly express and honor this layer of history in a meaningful way. I hope, too, that you will thank them for reaching out to community stakeholders and reiterate the importance of continuing to engage all of us who care deeply about this history.

Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Judith Teitelman
Council District #4

DAVID RYU
L.A. CITY COUNCILMEMBER

Date: June 18, 2020
Hearing: Cultural Heritage Commission, Item 5
Case: Sakai-kozawa Residence/ Tokio Florist And Pole Sign, HCM #1198,
Site address:2718 Hyperion
Description: *"Commission Review and Comment on Proposed Demolition of Structures Related to Early Start Demolition in Advance of Proposed Rehabilitation Project."*

Commissioners it's wonderful to see you all again. Emma Howard Director of Planning, Councilmember David Ryu.

The Sakai-Kozawa Tokio Florist Residence and Pole sign, one of a far too scant handful of Asian-American Historic Cultural Monuments, and context here is key.

In all our discussion on the site, it's clear that the true Historic Cultural value of the site is entirely in the physical expression of an early 20th Century house adapted into the lived experience of a Japanese American family from the 1960s on. The addition of what Commissioner Barron called "folk art additions" and I call "vernacular architecture", and Japanese landscaping design, as contrasted with a hundred year old house tells a deeply Los Angeles story; of an immigrant family, surviving extreme xenophobia, of the city's growth, of early industries, the flower market and the agricultural uses, of a woman run business, the story of Yuki, Sumi, Frank and Susie. This is a site that was both beautiful and beloved in its heyday.

As the historic report notes, "*The property's ancillary buildings and built infrastructure primarily associated with the Sakai-Kozawa family and the Tokio Florist are in extremely poor condition and the majority must be removed and replaced. These features include the greenhouse, carport, koi ponds, foot bridges, retaining walls, and paving materials"* As someone said in one of the calls I was on, "the site just isn't the same if it's just a nicely restored old house in the middle of a Japanese garden, without the porch, the potting benches and the greenhouse".

Before us today is an exciting new challenge in historic preservation and restoration. It is a question of how to properly represent the spirit of a property like this when so much of what is key architecture lies outside of a building permit process. In my conversations with representatives of the property and representatives of the Little Tokyo and historic preservation committee, one thing that is clearly agreed on is that these structures described in the report as "Ancillary Buildings and Built Infrastructure" are fantastic, creative and inspiring. They're beautiful and expressive in equal proportion to the fact that they are also unpermitted, not built to last and in poor condition. In particular the structure we all returned to discussing over and

over is the greenhouse. Even as it collapses, we all acknowledge the beauty and spirit of this salvaged materials greenhouse.

There is consensus on the broad goal between both the owners and the preservation community as to the fact that these structures are going to need to be replaced with new legal structures that creatively interpret and give homage to what was there before.

I also think it's fair to say that both the owners and the community representatives before you today are fully and openly engaged in the dialogue with each other. Our office is very glad to have two sides so willing to speak to each other and so focused on a shared end goal. Today we are really here to talk about the specific points and processes that need to be facilitated to get us to the end goal. The process here is critically important, given the historic cultural context.

Historically, people of color and women have been restricted from ownership and access across the entire landscape of our City. It is much easier to restore a building where the entirety of the structure is indisputably historic and aesthetic, as created by a master architect working in the height of his form. And I use the words “master” and “his” deliberately here because women and people of color were rarely given opportunities to build the monumental structures of Los Angeles. Their contributions up until recent decades are primarily vernacular, often unpermitted or non-conforming. The stories of non-white Los Angeles is expressed in many buildings that are not necessarily built for beauty, not built to last, not made of the most rare and precious materials. They are buildings built by people restricted from ownership using creativity to solve the issues before them. The cultural significance of these structures will not always be in architectural innovation. They might express instead in forms of survival and resilience. It is time we dig deep and task ourselves with creating a true framework for preservation of cultural resources that are ephemeral. If we fail, we will continue to pave over the stories that are the most vital to lift up and showcase.

Which brings me to the plan presented. Right now the applicant has given you information and to initiate a Phase One, which is the demolition and initial restoration of the permitted structures separate from the Phase Two replacement phase. However, the Phase Two replacement is a key element in the HCM report.

The community has some concerns that moving forward on Phase One without Phase Two in place means that there will be ambiguity or an opportunity for the ownership to walk away without completing the restoration. The owners express their worry that they will be stalled out trying to reach consensus on Phase Two, and in the meantime the structures might collapse or cause harm. Therefore framing the process is crucial and specificity is key. There must be full documentation of the elements being removed, and a clear sense of when, what and how the replacements are chosen.

The community asks “what is the rush?” and asks that you consider a delay on demo and removal of the unpermitted structures until a fully realized plan is in place for the replacement structures.

The applicant says the rush is the condition of the structures and note that none of them are legal, so from the point of view of the Department of Building and Safety, technically none of these structures fully exist in terms of permitting and must be removed to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy.

Our office suggests that your Commission establish a process such that there’s a clear end goal with enforceable teeth. We suggest that any restoration plan fully articulate a process for design consultation that includes some structure for public input, and requires clearance conditions that specify which ancillary structures must be replaced with acceptable new structures to the satisfaction of this Commission before the project is issued a certificate of occupancy. That makes sure the replacement work is a key part of the entire project.

That definition of “acceptable” replacement structures is also crucial here. In the past our office has asked that a condition of design sensitive projects include requirements for a given number of meetings with specific attendees- such as the Little Tokyo Historic Society, The LA Conservancy, our office, the owners and staff of the OHR. I think at this point I would ask that when the plan is presented to the Commission that you consider including some similar requirements for design of the replacement structures to ensure there are several required conversation points hosted by our office or the OHR and including representatives of the nominating parties before the plans for replacement are presented to your Commission. At this point in time I don’t think anyone knows what an acceptable replacement structure will look like, so it's definitely going to need some element of dialogue and revision to figure out what encapsulates the true spirit.

Lastly, this is not a key element that is crucial to either party but we were struck in 2018 by the massive public engagement with the estate sale at the Sakai-Kozawa residence. People wanted to own a piece of the history and Susie Kozawa, granddaughter to Yuki, was quoted in an article by the Eastsider as saying, she hoped for “creative reuse” “so that there was a link to what was here.” When the site is fully restored it will be an office space, not open to public visitorship.

Our office asked and the owner has said he is willing to store the physical materials from any removal of the structures on site until such time as the restoration and rehabilitation is completed. Our office would like to partner with the Little Tokyo artist community to see if there's a way that the original building materials could be thoughtfully offered for creative reuse by local artists or historic societies if they're interested. I fully acknowledge that this might be infeasible and as such ask the Commission to record that this offer would be time limited such that if no artists are interested the owner isn’t obliged to keep the materials past the point of a certificate

of occupancy being issued, but in the interim, but we strongly believe that there is value in seeing if as Ms. Kozawa put it, those materials could become a link to what was there, and more fully accessible in new ways offsite.

Our office is honored to work on this project. It is a position of trust and a privilege to help frame a new approach that is respectful, thoughtful and restorative. It is in the process of projects like this that we can work towards building an anti-racist future. Councilmember Ryu is hugely supportive of the Tokio Florist site, and we're optimistic that under your leadership, this collaboration will be a positive outcome for everyone involved.

Thank you.

Bringing History Alive: Kuang Do Song's Story

By Christy Webb and Laura Meyers

Historic Buildings tell the stories of the people who walked through their doors. That is the Power of Place. For the Korean Methodist Church, the story is about a small group of impoverished immigrants and freedom fighters who fled their homeland in c. 1905-1910 as the Japanese Empire asserted control and then sovereignty over Korea. And it is also about individuals who struggled for decades to gain an economic foothold in America.

One of those individuals was Kuang Do Song, who eventually found her way inside the Korean Methodist Church's doors – late in life – to practice her faith and culture.

We first "met" Kuang Do Song in 2018, as we were preparing our annual Living History Tour at Angelus Rosedale Cemetery, where actors at graveside, in costume and with set vignettes, present first person portrayals of some of the historic personages who are buried at this cemetery. Our theme that year was The Immigrant's Story, and we had researched the life stories of immigrants from Turkish Armenia, Japan, Mexico, Germany, France, China, and, in Kuang Do Song's case, Korea.

Last summer, we also met (by chance) members of the Korean Methodist Church, who were on a pilgrimage of sorts. They were on a tour of their congregation's historic roots, having visited (exterior only) the church on Orchard, and they were now at the cemetery itself, visiting the grave of Florence Sherman, its founder, and also several monuments to figures in the Korean Independence Movement, also located at Angelus Rosedale. Their roots run deep.

In 1910, when Kuang Do Song first set foot in America, Los Angeles was becoming home to a very small group of Korean immigrants (at that time, not including her family, see her own narrative below). Why were they in Los Angeles? The story is the same as for many other immigrant groups: Aggression, cultural hatred, genocide.

In the case of Korea, the Japanese had cruelly dominated the peninsula since the late 1800s, with "treaties" and then actual invasion by the Japanese Imperial Army. In 1910, Korea was annexed by the Empire of Japan after years of war, intimidation and political machinations.

In the 1880s, American evangelists, diplomats, consultants, military advisers, educators, and businessmen flocked to Korea. At that time, a tiny group of Koreans managed to go to the United States, arriving in San Francisco in 1885. They were mostly political and social reformers expelled from Korea following an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the government.

By 1910, when Korea was annexed to Japan, the Korean population in America had grown to 5,008. Under the Japanese rule, few Koreans were allowed to migrate to the U.S., and there were only 7,030 Koreans in America in 1950. It should be noted that from 1910 to 1943, even though they were a persecuted people, the US government treated Koreans as citizens of Japan and subjects of the Emperor. Japanese citizens were not allowed to own land in the United States, and were ineligible to apply for U.S. citizenship. Same rules, therefore, applied to the Korean immigrants (which is, along with poverty,

the reason why the Korean Methodist congregation was not able to OWN a church until after World War II.)

Japanese rule over Korea ended on August 15, 1945 upon the Surrender of Japan in World War II, and the armed forces of the United States and the Soviet Union occupied the territory. Even so, Korean immigration to Los Angeles was very slow for another several decades.

For Kuang Do Song, her life started out happy in Korea, with a relatively middle class home life which ended abruptly on the day the Imperial Army entered the town. After moving to America, her life was spent with deep love of family, Christian faith – and abject poverty for decades.

We hope her story can help bring to life the many stories that could be told by the other members of the Korean Methodist Church congregation – we just don't know all of them. Yet.

In First Person: The Story of Kuang Do Song, Korean immigrant (c. 1879-1969)

Come in, come in to my kitchen. It's not much, but we make do. I've cooked all my life for groups of men working in the fields who had no wives to cook for them. I stood all day from dawn to dusk but barely made a living. The Korean men I cooked for in the Riverside citrus groves made this table from things found at the dump yard-they were happy to have a place to eat good home-cooked Korean meals together.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

My name is Kuang Do Song.

I grew up in a beautiful land far away - Korea. My family had been there for thousands of years. We were poor farmers. But my husband's family were prosperous city people who lived in Pyongyang; his father and mother were both teachers.

My mother in law taught me to read and write; I scratched the letters on our dirt floor. Many of her students came to live in Los Angeles.

Our families had been in Korea for thousands of years. But for two events, we would still be there. First came the Christian missionaries. We were all baptized by the Presbyterians. My husband taught the missionaries to speak Korean, and one of them, Dr. Moffett, translated the Bible into Korean. They also taught us about Democracy and freedom.

Then, from the East came the Japanese invaders. The Japanese took our house for barracks for their soldiers. The Japanese were cruel and unpredictable: they declared our flag illegal; they took away our language and taught only Japanese in schools. It became a crime to teach Korean history. All Korean books were burned. Families were allowed to keep only one knife for cooking. They uprooted our trees and planted Japanese species in their place. They closed our newspapers and controlled our temples and Christian churches, to snuff out resistance. We were second-class citizens. They took girls and made them into "Comfort Women." It was the humiliation of our entire nation.

My husband's family made a hard choice: we would be the ones to leave our ancestral homeland, to go to America without any money or plans, to make sure one branch of our family survived to honor our ancestors and live a better life. It was 1905.

In the port city of Inchon, my husband **Paik Sin Koo** was recruited by the cane growers from Hawaii. His wages: 50 cents a day. I was only 23 when we left Korea for Hawaii. My husband Paik Sin Koo was 32. We traveled many days by boat, my husband, my 9-year-old first born son Paik Meung Sun, and my daughter, 5- year-old Paik Kuang Sun (who later became the author, Mary Paik Lee; she wrote about our "*Quiet Odyssey*" of coming to America as immigrants.

I was so seasick, I never left my bunk.

My husband was indentured to the grower; he owed the cane farmers one year of servitude. We arrived with only the clothes on our backs and slept on the ground in a grass hut. He was too proud to let me work. We couldn't even afford a banana for 5 cents. Our faith kept us going. My husband often preached to other Korean field workers.

Remember, Hawaii wasn't part of America yet. To me, Hawaii seemed to be owned by the cane and pineapple farmers! We prayed to get to America.

My husband heard from friends in Riverside, CA that he could make 10-15 cents an hour for 10 hours of work a day. We borrowed money to pay for our passage to America.

We arrived in San Francisco in 1906. Our welcome to America: As we walked down the gangplank, a group of young white men spit on us. The men kicked up my skirt and called us names. My daughter Kuang Sun asked her father: "Why come to a place where we are so hated?" He answered: "We deserve it because of the way Koreans treated the first missionaries in Korea. We threw rocks at them and called them white devils because of their blue eyes and yellow or red hair. The missionaries just lowered their heads and paid no attention. They showed by their good works that they were just as good as us." My husband told Kuang Sun: "We must study hard and learn to show Americans that we are just as good as they are." All 10 of our children learned this lesson well. We were people of faith.

The journey to Riverside was our first time on a train. Friends from our village in Korea waited for us at the station.

Japanese, Chinese, Mexicans, and Koreans each had their own settlements outside town because Orientals were not allowed to live with whites. We lived in a one room shack made for the Chinese men who built the Railroad in the 1880s. It had dirt floors. No matter how hard we tried, there was nothing we could do to stop the wind blowing through cracks in the walls. The children slept on wooden shelves, covered with straw, which my husband attached to the walls. My daughter Kuang Sun used a block of wood for a pillow. My husband and I slept on the dirt floor.

Here, finally, my husband gave up his pride; he let me work. It was decided that I would cook for about 30 single men who worked in the citrus groves. This was the only way to make a living for our family. Breakfast at 5 a.m., pack a lunch for the men in their tin pails, supper at 7 pm. My husband went to the Chinese and asked for credit to get us big iron pots and pans, dishes, chopsticks, rice and groceries. The Korean men built us a dining shack out of materials in the dump yard, and a long table and benches to seat 30 men on each side.

And I too had to give up my pride. I cut off my beautiful, dark shiny hair that grew down to the ground. I couldn't cook with such long hair. It was necessary but it made me sad. "We had already lost everything else that meant anything to us."

(*Philip Ahn who became a movie actor lived across from us in Riverside, along with other old friends from Korea. Philip's father was the Great Patriot Dosan Ahn Chang-Ho. My husband, Paik Sin Koo, became friends with Ahn Chang-Ho and later supported his efforts to "fight the Japanese to keep their Imperialism from obliterating Korea from the face of the earth.")*

On Saturdays, my children and the Mexican children went begging at the slaughterhouse to get all the animal organs the butchers threw out, livers, hearts, entrails, tripe. We would have gone hungry without these discarded organs. They were good children; they gathered firewood, took care of the babies and filled the wine barrels with water so I could do my cooking.

One time, as Kuang Sun helped me pack their lunches, she told the men she had never tasted an orange. At the end of the day, when she went to wash the tin lunch pails, she noticed they were heavy; the men had hidden oranges in their lunch pails. My husband stopped this, telling the citrus pickers we would all get in trouble.

My oldest, Meung and Paik Kuang Sun, started school at Washington Irving School in Riverside. The white children couldn't pronounce their names and taunted Kuang Sun by singing over and over: "Ching Chong, Chinaman, Sitting on a wall. Along came a white man and chopped his head off." As they sang that verse, the white girls slapped Kuang on the back of the neck. My children were brave and determined to go to school but I was afraid for them.

Meung and Kuang Sun helped me to give American names to my younger children, Ernest who had been born in Hawaii, and Stanford, Arthur, Lawrence, Edward, Ralph, Charlotte, Florence…. .

We left Riverside in 1910. My husband was worried about my health, standing all day, working so hard. We paid all our debts to the Chinese and moved to Claremont. Even though we lived in a real American house with a gas stove, electric lights, a bathroom, we couldn't make enough to live there for long.

We moved to Northern California, to Colusa. That was a disaster. The depression of 1911 hit. My husband would not let us go to the soup kitchen to be humiliated.

I fed my children biscuits and milk diluted so much with water it had no nourishment. No rice or meat. My husband still thanked God at each meal but we had stomach cramps all the time from lack of food. Finally, my oldest daughter Kuang Sun got a job cleaning the house of the school principal for $1.00 a week. My husband was so humiliated that our 11-year-old had to work to feed us. These were the "hungry years" for us.

Next, we moved to Roberts Island in the Sacramento San Joaquin Delta in 1912. My husband and an old friend Mr. Kim planned to grow potatoes. God was leading us to the right place. The farmhouse was full of snakes and rats. But my husband showed the children how to fish for bass and catfish and crabs. We dug up vegetables growing on the shore of the river from seeds discarded by farmers. Chinese, who lived on this farm before us, left pots and pans and woks behind. Mr. Kim brought food supplies-rice, soy sauce.

For a little while, we had enough to eat.

My husband hired Sikhs to help with the harvest. Again, I cooked for the men working in the fields. But then, another depression hit. Our potato crop was worthless!

Again, we were desperate for work. My husband heard from other friends working in the quicksilver mining company in Idria, California. We rushed to get there and left everything behind.

In Idria, in the mountains, the pine trees smelled beautiful. We lived in another old shack. Only the Caucasian workers had electricity. My husband and the children gathered crayfish and watercress from the streams, and gooseberries and blackberries.

Sin Paik worked in the furnace where the fumes were poisonous to humans and plant life. Soldiers guarded the mines because the quicksilver was used for explosives. Most of the workers were Chilenos and Mexicans.

Meung and Kuang Sun graduated from school in Idria. They were the only students to ever graduate there. They passed the state tests and were eligible to go to high school. But my husband was so ill, his teeth were falling out and he couldn't eat. The poison fumes from the furnace were killing him. He needed Meung to go to work to support the family. Meung gave up his dream of high school and college.

My daughter Kuang Sun left the mountains to go to high school in Hollister. There, she worked for room and board. She told me there were signs everywhere that said "Whites Only." America's South was not the only place unfriendly to outsiders.

In 1918, the Spanish flu came to the United States. My daughter Kuang and I were with a woman who lived nearby when she died. She asked us to take care of her five-year-old daughter. We did until her father finally came for her.

My husband and I did not get the flu, but all the children did. Kuang almost died from flu and malnutrition. She had to stay out of school for a whole year.

My husband took the dangerous job in the furnace because we wanted to save enough to send Grandmother Sin Bok Duk three hundred dollars to help celebrate her sixtieth birthday. This is the most important birthday. All her students and friends and family celebrated in Korea.

In 1919, we had some sad news from Korea. Rebels had written a Korean Declaration of Independence patterned after the American Declaration of Independence. They knew it was their death sentence. The Japanese censored letters leaving Korea but some news got through. Koreans were jailed, beaten and tortured for rebelling.

In Pyongyang, the Paik family, my husband's family, were dragged off to camps where they were beaten and tortured. My mother-in-law, that gentle teacher, was blinded during this torture. We felt sad and troubled by the news but had to carry on.

Even though we hated the Japanese invaders, here in the US we were treated like Japanese, because we were subjects of the Emperor of Japan.

Orientals could not own or rent land unless they were citizens. As immigrants, we could not own land, but Kuang used her brother Stanford's name to rent a farm in Orange County because he was an American citizen. Kuang and her husband made private oral agreements with whites to lease land for farming.

About 1926, Kuang and her husband moved to Los Angeles, where they bought a fruit stand from a Korean man. Koreans were holding church services at Philip Ahn's house, our old neighbor from Riverside, who had become an actor.

My son Meung took a job with the Jan-U-Wine chop suey factory owned by a Korean family. They made chow mein and other Korean food. It was the first canned food business in Los Angeles.

By 1940, we were all farming in Whittier. Our neighbors were Japanese. They asked us to take care of their farms when they were taken away to concentration camps. This was some different from what happened in Korea!! Still, many Japanese homes were looted.

One of my neighbors in Whittier was **Hannah Nixon** -- you've probably heard her son became President—She stood up for us when neighbors said things like, "go back to Japan" "we don't want any dirty Japs here" Mrs. Nixon told them we were not Japanese. But it didn't stop the name-calling. I'd

heard it all before, but now after Pearl Harbor, it was worse. The only good thing about the war: We sold our vegetables at higher prices because all the Japanese farmers were gone.

The war hit close to home for us, too. Five of my sons were drafted. I don't know if any of you have been to war. But my sons were never the same. Arthur was shot in the head and had terrible pain the rest of his life.

My husband passed away in Ernest's house in Whittier in 1947, at the age of 74 from a cerebral hemorrhage. All seven of my sons were pallbearers. Sin Paik was the only one who shared my memories of Korea. We were together since I was 16. He is buried with me at Rosedale Cemetery.

After the War, eventually, most of the "Whites Only" signs came off the public buildings. It's probably hard for you to believe signs like that were still common here in California. But even after that, "Japs not wanted here" signs stayed on theaters, churches, gas stations for a long time. And we still couldn't vote because we weren't allowed to be citizens.

Kuang Sun tried to rent a house in Whittier, the City of Brotherly Love, but was turned away. They were forced to move to Los Angeles. Kuang Sun and her husband found a house on La Salle Avenue, not far from here. Kuang Sun and HM Lee also bought a 12-unit apartment building on Broadway, near the old Jan-U-Wine chop suey factory.

I came to live near Kuang Sun with my son Stanford. Stanford made me breakfast every morning before leaving for work. Mary came every day to clean my house, to bathe me, cook my lunch, prepare my supper. I was now able to relax, to read my Bible, and listen to music or watch television.

As I have said, we were people of faith. There were two main Korean churches in Los Angeles by this time, the Korean Methodist Church on Orchard, and the Korean Presbyterian Church on Jefferson Boulevard. The latter was my daughter's church even when she lived in El Modena and in Anaheim; during their farming years, she and her husband had donated what they could to build the church. But many congregants, like me, knew these two churches had much in common for the faithful, and we belonged to and worshipped at both at one time or another.

My daughter Kuang Sun became an American citizen in 1960. She changed her name from Kuang Sun Paik to Mary Paik Lee and wrote a book about our "*Quiet Odyssey*" from Korea to America.

I came to live near Kuang Sun with my son Stanford.

My children took care of me until the end. I passed away happily in March, 1969, when I was 89 years old. I had traveled through two centuries and two countries in my lifetime.

I reflect back on my life. We came to America with no money and no plans, but with high hopes for a better way of life. We didn't speak the language, but we put our faith in God and were determined to survive whatever hardships came our way. Our faith was our only comfort at times. I made tasty meals out of whatever I found growing in empty lots and fields. My bread was as good as or better than that sold in stores, so my daughter says in her book! Now, I'm buried here in Angelus Rosedale Cemetery, thousands of miles from where I was born. Here we "Asians" finally mingle with early white settlers, with Mexican Americans and with African Americans.

Sometimes, to my shame, my children went hungry. But we hung on through sheer will power and lived to see many changes. The most important thing for me was always family. My son Young is also here in Rosedale Cemetery with me, my son Arthur. My first child Meung, my son, is also here; he had 5 daughters and 1 son. I lived long enough to see the promise of a better way of life for my children and grandchildren. They have life easier, they are educated and do not know the sacrifices we made. I pray they will never know the suffering we went through. They will find it easier to build their dreams in their own country.

I am an immigrant. I am an American.

Office of the City Clerk

Administrative Services Division

Neighborhood Council (NC) Funding Program

Board Action Certification (BAC) Form

NC Name: United Neighborhoods Neighborhood Council	**Meeting Date:** Oct. 4, 2018
Budget Fiscal Year: 2018	**Agenda Item No:** 6.d.7
Board Motion and/or Public Benefit Statement (CIP and NPG):	The UNNC P&Z Committee MOVES to recommend to the Gov. Board that it ask CP Herb Wesson/CD10 to nominate 1554 S. St. Andrews PL as a Los Angeles Historical Cultural Monument.
Method of Payment: (Select One)	☐ Check ☐ Credit Card ☐ Board Member Reimbursement

Vote Count

Recused Board Members must leave the room prior to any discussion and may not return to the room until after the vote is complete.

Board Member's First and Last Name	Board Position	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Ineligible	Recused
Raheem Dawson	Reg 1 Seat 1				x		
Denise Jackson	Reg. 1 Seat 2	x					
Patrick Bustad	Reg. 2 Seat 2				x		
Marielle Farman	Reg 2 Seat 2	x					
Cordell Hinton	Reg. 3 Seat 1	x					
Vacant Seat	Reg. 3 Seat 2	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Greg Jackson	Reg. 4 Seat 1	x					
Christine Carlson	Reg. 4 Seat 2				x		
Geoff Bowen	Reg. 5 Seat 1		x				
Courtney Hogesen	Reg. 5 Seat 1	x					
Tracey Hart	Reg. 6 Seat 1		x				
Najee Thorton	Reg. 6 Seat 1				x		
John Arnold	At Large A				x		
Tori Bailey	At Large A				x		
Lizy Moromisato	At Large A	x					
Ethan Polk	At Large A		x				
Esai Vergara	At Large A	x					
Gavin Abercrombie	At Large A	x					
Rosie Brown	At Large B	x					
Helen Chaudhuri	At Large B				x		
Laura Meyers	At Large B	x					
Vacant Seat	At Large B	----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Dolores Spears	At Large B	x					
Board Quorum:	**Total:**	11	3		7		

We, the authorized signers of the above named Neighborhood Council, declare that the information presented on this form is accurate and complete, and that a public meeting was held in accordance with all laws, policies, and procedures. The above was approved by the Neighborhood Council Board, at a Brown Act compliant public meeting where a quorum of the Board was present.

Authorized Signature	Authorized Signature:
Print/Type Name: Geoff Bowen	Print/Type Name: Ethan Polk
Date: 10/4/18	Date: 10/4/18

THE SILVER LAKE HERITAGE TRUST

June 17, 2020

To:
Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission
Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources
Councilman David Ryu

Hello,
We are writing with concern about the plan to remove several accessory structures at Tokio Florist, HCM 1198, at 2718 Hyperion Ave In Silver Lake.

The period of significance for this nomination is 1960-2006, when the Sakai-Kozawa family lived and operated their florist business here. They built these unpermitted structures, which were identified as character-defining features in the nomination, as part of this business.

Although the new owner, Red Car, has stated they want to honor the Kozawa period, their Mills Act application has given priority to the house, garden and pole sign. They now have a plan to remove all of the accessory structures at this site. Though these structures might present some unique problems, they are largely intact and relate directly to the Kozawa Family business, representing an integral layer of the monument as it was designated.

Please continue to honor the Kozawa Family and consider the importance of these structures when discussing the future of this site with the new owners of this local treasure.

Sincerely,
Carol Cetrone
Christine Kantner
the Silver Lake Heritage Trust

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Tokio Florist - HCM 1198

1 message

Carol Cetrone <perpetua33@gmail.com> Wed, Jun 17, 2020 at 2:17 PM
To: Planning Chc <chc@lacity.org>, ken.bernstein@lacity.org, Lambert Giessinger <lambert.giessinger@lacity.org>, Melissa Jones <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, David Ryu <cd4.issues@lacity.org>, Emma Howard <emma.howard@lacity.org>
Cc: Rosalind Sagara <RSagara@laconservancy.org>, Kristen Hayashi <khayashi@janm.org>, Catherine Gudis <cagudis@ucr.edu>, Adrian Fine <afine@laconservancy.org>

June 17, 2020

To:
Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission
Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources
Councilman David Ryu

Hello,
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Please continue to honor the Kozawa Family and consider the importance of these structures when discussing the future of this site with the new owners of this local treasure.

Sincerely,
Carol Cetrone
Christine Kantner

age Trust

SLHT.Kozawa.pdf
70K

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Little Toyko

1 message

rnparks1@juno.com <rnparks1@juno.com> Wed, Jun 17, 2020 at 2:55 PM
To: chc@lacity.org
Cc: etnracer@gmail.com

Greetings:
My name is Richard Parks, and my father was Wally Parks who founded the NHRA and was the first professional editor of Hot Rod Magazine. My father and the Sakais', Okas' and Moromotos' were friends and early dry lake racers prior to the war. We lost many good friends, some in combat and some in internment camps but the cultural center of the Japanese land speed racers on the dry lakes was in and around the Sakai Florist shop and many of the men bought flowers there out of loyalty to being dry lake racers. Danny Sakai was the literal superstar in his community, along with the Okas. It is a forgotten part of Los Angeles heritage, but it ought to be remembered and honored. When Danny died in a car crash in Los Angeles the outpouring of grief and the number of Japanese and non-Japanese flooded the chapel and the flowers came from the Sakai shop. Please consider the Florist shop as nearly a sacred place for many of us who remember or barely remember 1940's Los Angeles. Thank you,
Richard Parks
714-818-1281

SCRIPPS
THE WOMEN'S COLLEGE
• CLAREMONT •

1030 COLUMBIA AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA
91711-3948

June 16, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission
Department of City Planning
City of Los Angeles

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

As a scholar of Los Angeles and a professor of American studies, ethnic studies, and geography, I am deeply concerned after learning that the new owner of the former Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist and Pole Sign (City of LA Historical Cultural Monument #1198) intends to demolish structures on the property that the Kozawa family constructed to facilitate their Tokio Florist business. These structures, which were determined character-defining features in the historic cultural monument nomination, are tangible markers that convey the significance of the property. They are also important markers of an ethnic history that has been increasingly erased in the demographic transformation and gentrification of Silver Lake over the past two decades. Demolishing them without care for this significance amounts to whitewashing and disrespecting the true history of all of the people of Los Angeles.

The long history of Tokio Florist, which operated at this property for decades, anchors several important themes of Los Angeles's past. It is exemplary of a multigenerational Japanese American residence and family-owned and operated floral business. It is a testament to the history of a Japanese American community dating back more than a hundred years that has otherwise been virtually erased in this area. It also reflects the contributions of Japanese Angelenos to agriculture and horticulture, and the resilience of Japanese Angelenos who were able to reestablish themselves and their businesses after the devasting losses and trauma of Internment. Moreover, the history of Tokio Florist highlights the entrepreneurial might of women and how the Kozawa family became important "placemakers" over decades of being part of the community. If these structures, which illustrate the historical significance of Tokio Florist, are razed, these layers of history – through their rightful continued presence in the landscape – will be erased.

I hope you share my appreciation for the ways in which these structures on the site reflect the history of Tokio Florist as well as testify to a vital history of race, community-building, and resilience in the Silver Lake area. Please urge the current owners to think creatively about how to tangibly express and honor this history in a meaningful way. I hope, too, that you will thank them for reaching out to community stakeholders and reiterate the importance of continuing to engage all who care deeply about this history.

Sincerely,



Wendy Cheng
Associate Professor of American Studies
Coauthor, *A People's Guide to Los Angeles*
Author, *The Changs Next Door to the Díazes: Remapping Race in Suburban California*

SMITHSONIAN CENTER FOR FOLKLIFE & CULTURAL HERITAGE

June 16, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission
Department of City Planning
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street, Room 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

I have followed with great interest the disposition of the former Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist (City of LA Historical Cultural Monument #1198). I was encouraged by the fact that the current property owners were engaging local stakeholders in their plans. But I am now very concerned over the recent news of the plan to remove structures on the property that uniquely contribute to the physical/tangible presentation of the site's historical and cultural significance.

I write to you in my position as a curator and public historian who has worked for two decades on projects related specifically to Los Angeles history and more generally around issues of cultural heritage sustainability. I write this as a board member of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation (APIAHiP), a national network involved in historic and cultural preservation in Asian and Pacific Islander American communities. And I also write as a Silver Lake neighbor: I had permanent residence in the community for two decades (918 Tularosa Drive and 2417 Griffith Park Boulevard)—and I have observed the dramatic changes in Silver Lake's built landscape and demography since the late 1980s. Though I now live in Washington, D.C., when not constrained by a pandemic, I return regularly to Los Angeles, almost every other month, always staying in Silver Lake on Griffith Park Boulevard, just around the corner from Tokio Florist. I was a regular Tokio Florist customer, and when I was a curator at the Japanese American National Museum (1999-2009), I was involved in documenting the history of the business and the family.

The historical cultural monument nomination submitted by Rosalind Sagara, Catherine Gudis, and Kristen Hayashi centers on the cultural significance of the property as a rare tangible embodiment of Southern California's floriculture and cut flower industries, which were integral to the region's development. With its grounds and structures—specifically those designated for removal—Tokio Florist anchors multiple foundational stories about Los Angeles's past, including those that have been marginalized or overlooked. Structures such as the porte-cochere, greenhouse, porch addition, and car port also uniquely represent a strategy of multi-generational family-based and female-led entrepreneurship that enabled the sustained participation of senior family members well into their eighth and ninth decades of life: multiple functions and facets of floriculture were physically integrated with the family's domestic space, from cultivation to harvest and storage, from floral arrangement and display to delivery services to accessible spaces for client transactions.

Smithsonian Institution
Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
PO Box 37012, MRC 520
Washington, DC 20013-7012
folklife.si.edu

I applaud the city's historical cultural monument designation. And I appreciate that the site's significance has been reinforced by the fact that material culture from the family and business are now being preserved by several major institutions, including the Huntington Library, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, and the Japanese American National Museum. What a rare and valuable opportunity we have in being able to carefully approach the preservation of the built environment that anchors these important collections. And how unfortunate it would be to lose the distinctive physical assets of a landscape that is so powerfully tied to the local neighborhood's storied cultural-social ecology—one that has historically supported creative/artist communities as well as leftist, progressive, and anti-racist organizing.

Thank you for your consideration of the significance of all the structures on the Tokio Florist property. I am grateful that the current owners are engaging local stakeholders and historians. And I hope that they will continue to do so as they explore and expand their options for tangibly recognizing and honoring the history represented in the site.

Sincerely,



Sojin Kim, curator
Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

APIAHiP
Asian & Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation

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Michelle Magalong, PhD
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APIAHiP
2279 Glendale Blvd., #3
Los Angeles, CA 90039
www.apiahip.org

June 15, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission
Department of City Planning
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street, Room 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation, we would like to express our concerns about the potential plans to demolish structures on the property of the former Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist (City of LA Historical Cultural Monument #1198) by the new owners. These structures, which were determined character-defining features in the historic cultural monument nomination, are tangible markers that convey the significance of the property.

Last year, APIAHiP supported the HCM nomination of Tokio Florist as it centered on the cultural significance of the property as a rare example of the floriculture and cut flower industries in Los Angeles, which were integral to the region's commercial and early industrial development. From 1960 to 2006, this site was the long-time location of Tokio Florist as well as the residence of proprietors Yuki Sakai, her daughter Sumi (Sakai) Kozawa and son-in-law Frank Kozawa. The buildings and components on this site related to flower growing remain intact in a neighborhood of northeastern Los Angeles where flower stands and nurseries once dominated the landscape.

The long history of Tokio Florist, which operated at this property for decades, anchors several integral themes to Los Angeles's past. It is exemplary of a multigenerational Japanese American residence and family-owned and operated floral business. It also reflects the contributions of Japanese Angelenos to agriculture and horticulture. Moreover, the history of Tokio Florist highlights the entrepreneurial might of women. If these structures, which illustrate the historical significance of Tokio Florist are razed, this layer of history will be erased.

We hope you share our appreciation for the ways in which these physical structures on the site reflect the history of Tokio Florist. We urge the current owners to think creatively about how to tangibly express and honor this layer of history in a meaningful way. We appreciate them for reaching out to community stakeholders and reiterate the importance of continuing to engage all of us who care deeply about this history. We encourage the Commission and the developers to explore innovative and creative alternatives in handling the potential reconstruction or adaptation of the vernacular architecture of this important site. In addition, community engagement has been crucial to the preservation of Tokio Florist and we strongly encourage the developers to continue in that same light of dialogue and collaboration. Rushed demolition of structures at this site should be the last resort while meaningful and thoughtful engagement is necessary.

The mission of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation is to protect historic places and cultural resources significant to Asian and Pacific Islander Americans through historic preservation and heritage conservation.

Sincerely,

michellegmagalong

Michelle G. Magalong, PhD
Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Tokio Florist / Cultural Heritage Committe

1 message

Maria Demopoulos <mariamdemo@gmail.com> Tue, Jun 16, 2020 at 7:58 PM
To: chc@lacity.org
Cc: cd4.issues@lacity.org, littletokyohs@gmail.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

As a resident of Silver Lake, I am deeply concerned after learning that the new owner of the former Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist and Pole Sign (City of LA Historical Cultural Monument #1198) intends to demolish structures on the property that the Kozawa family constructed to facilitate their Tokio Florist business. These structures, which were determined character-defining features in the historic cultural monument nomination, are tangible markers that convey the significance of the property.

The historic cultural monument nomination centered on the cultural significance of the property as a rare example of the floriculture and cut flower industries in Los Angeles, which were integral to the region's commercial and early industrial development. From 1960 to 2006, this site was the long-time location of Tokio Florist as well as the residence of proprietors Yuki Sakai, her daughter Sumi (Sakai) Kozawa and son-in-law Frank Kozawa. The buildings and components on this site related to flower growing remain intact in a neighborhood of northeastern Los Angeles where flower stands and nurseries once dominated the landscape.

The long history of Tokio Florist, which operated at this property for decades, anchors several integral themes to Los Angeles's past. It is exemplary of a multigenerational Japanese American residence and family-owned and operated floral business. It also reflects the contributions of Japanese Angelenos to agriculture and horticulture. Moreover, the history of Tokio Florist highlights the entrepreneurial might of women. If these structures, which illustrate the historical significance of Tokio Florist are razed, this layer of history will be erased.

I hope you share my appreciation for the ways in which these structures on the site reflect the history of Tokio Florist. Please urge the current owners to think creatively about how to tangibly express and honor this layer of history in a meaningful way. I hope, too, that you will thank them for reaching out to community stakeholders and reiterate the importance of continuing to engage all of us who care deeply about this history.

Sincerely,

Maria Demopoulos

2321 Silver Ridge Ave., LA 90039

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

TokyoFlorist

1 message

Molly Callender <skylarkstudio@att.net> Wed, Jun 17, 2020 at 10:56 AM
To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>
Cc: "littletokyohs@gmail.com" <littletokyohs@gmail.com>, "cd4.issues@lacity.org" <cd4.issues@lacity.org>

June 17, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission

Department of City Planning

City of Los Angeles

200 North Spring Street, Room 272

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

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I hope you share my appreciation for the ways in which these structures on the site reflect the history of Tokio Florist. Please urge the current owners to think creatively about how to tangibly express and honor this layer of history in a meaningful way. I hope, too, that you will thank them for reaching out to community stakeholders and reiterate the importance of continuing to engage all of us who care deeply about this history.

Sincerely,

Molly Callender
1425 Talmadge Street
Los Angeles, CA
(LA Council District 4)

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Tokio Florist review

1 message

Michael Alexander <m.s.alexander@icloud.com> Mon, Jun 15, 2020 at 1:57 PM
To: chc@lacity.org
Cc: cd4.issues@lacity.org, littletokyohs@gmail.com

June 15, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission

Department of City Planning

City of Los Angeles

200 North Spring Street, Room 272

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

The erratic and uncoordinated development that has occurred in my own Council District #13 has been egregious, but I write regarding especially egregious plans concerning the historic Tokio Florist buildings. **We must save and honor the history of Japanese Americans in our neighborhood!**

I am deeply concerned after learning that the new owner of the former Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist and Pole Sign (City of LA Historical Cultural Monument #1198) intends to demolish structures on the property that the Kozawa family constructed to facilitate their Tokio Florist business. These structures, which were determined character-defining features in the historic cultural monument nomination, are tangible markers that convey the significance of the property.

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I hope you share my appreciation for the ways in which these structures on the site reflect the history of Tokio Florist. Please urge the current owners to think creatively about how to tangibly express and honor this layer of history in a meaningful way. I hope, too, that you will thank them for reaching out to community stakeholders and reiterate the importance of continuing to engage all of us who care deeply about this history.

Sincerely,

Michael Alexander

1342 Lucile Avenue, Los Angeles 90026

Council District #13

LITTLE TOKYO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June 15, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission
Department of City Planning
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street, Room 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

I and the Little Tokyo Historical Society are deeply concerned after learning that the new owner of the former Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist (City of LA Historic-Cultural Monument #1198) intends to demolish structures on the property that the Kozawa family constructed to facilitate their Tokio Florist business. These structures, which were determined character-defining features in the historic cultural monument nomination, are tangible markers that convey the significance of the property.

The HCM nomination centered on the cultural significance of the property as a rare example of the floriculture and cut flower industries in Los Angeles, which were integral to the region's commercial and early industrial development. From 1960 to 2006, this site was the long-time location of Tokio Florist as well as the residence of proprietors, Yuki Sakai, her daughter, Sumi (Sakai) Kozawa, and son-in-law Frank Kozawa. The buildings and components on this site related to flower growing remain intact in a neighborhood of northeastern Los Angeles where flower stands and nurseries once thrived.

The long history of Tokio Florist, which operated at this property for decades, anchors several integral themes to Los Angeles's past. It is exemplary of a multigenerational Japanese American residence and family-owned and operated floral business. It also reflects the contributions of Japanese Angelenos to agriculture and horticulture. Moreover, the history of Tokio Florist highlights the entrepreneurial might of women. If these structures, which illustrate the historical significance of Tokio Florist are razed, this layer of history will be erased.

We hope you share LTHS' appreciation for the ways in which these structures reflect the history of Tokio Florist. Please urge the current owners to think creatively about how to tangibly express and honor this history in a meaningful way. Also, please thank them for reaching out to community stakeholders and reiterate the importance of continuing to engage all of us who care deeply about this history.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Okamura

Michael G. Okamura
President

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Cultural Heritage commission

1 message

Louise Noeth <velocity333@icloud.com> Thu, Jun 18, 2020 at 4:24 PM
To: irene.gonzalez@lacity.org
Cc: chc@lacity.org, Cheri Nagai <cynagai@hotmail.com>, Richard Parks <rnparks1@juno.com>

Hello Ms. Gonzales,

Although no longer a resident, but remain an active historian currently writing 3 books on various topics for universities and retail sale, I am asking that you please forward this letter to the Cultural Heritage commission President Richard Barron and Vice President Gail Kennard. I have been contacted to supply pertinent, verified information on the "Sakai-Kozawa/ Tokio Florist site" currently under review.

Danny Sakai, who was inextricably linked to the site together with his family, was last year recognized with an induction into the Dry Lakes Racing Hall of Fame nearly a half-century after his untimely death. My personal and professional research into this individual solidified not only his stunning contributions to early motorsports in Los Angeles, but unearthed a cultural and familial long forgotten by today's citizens.

I offer below the documentation that was on Page 37 of the Induction Ceremony Program for Danny Sakai's induction as a gesture of adding solid historical information to the decision making process now before the Cultural Heritage commission. Should any further information or verification be required, I am happy to oblige with answers to questions.

People from the Past

danny sakai

August 16, 1920 - October 17, 1941

Akira "Danny" Sakai, who developed his passion for cars as a youngster, was born on August 16, 1920 in the Glendale area to Masao and Yuki Sakai. Tragically, his father Masao was killed by a drunk driver when Danny was five years old. Danny was a caring, kind brother to his younger sister, Miyoko, who recalls how he had an interest in "anything with wheels" and often disassembled her roller skates to make his own version of a scooter or skateboard.

"My skates were never the same again," she joked. Danny attended Los Feliz Elementary School, then went onto Thomas Starr King Middle School and graduated from John Marshall High School.

Known to occasionally play golf in Griffith Park with friends, Danny bought a Mercury while in high school and immediately chopped the roof, shaved the door handles, and installed a remote switch for opening the trunk -- all without any formal mechanical training. A voracious reader, he was always borrowing books from friends to study and was meticulous about everything, including padlocking his bedroom door! He had a close relationship with Mal Ord, whose cylinder heads were part of his "Sakai Modified." Mal Ord would often invite Danny to have dinner, who would then ask one of his sisters to press a white shirt for him to wear as he was always conscious of making a good appearance.

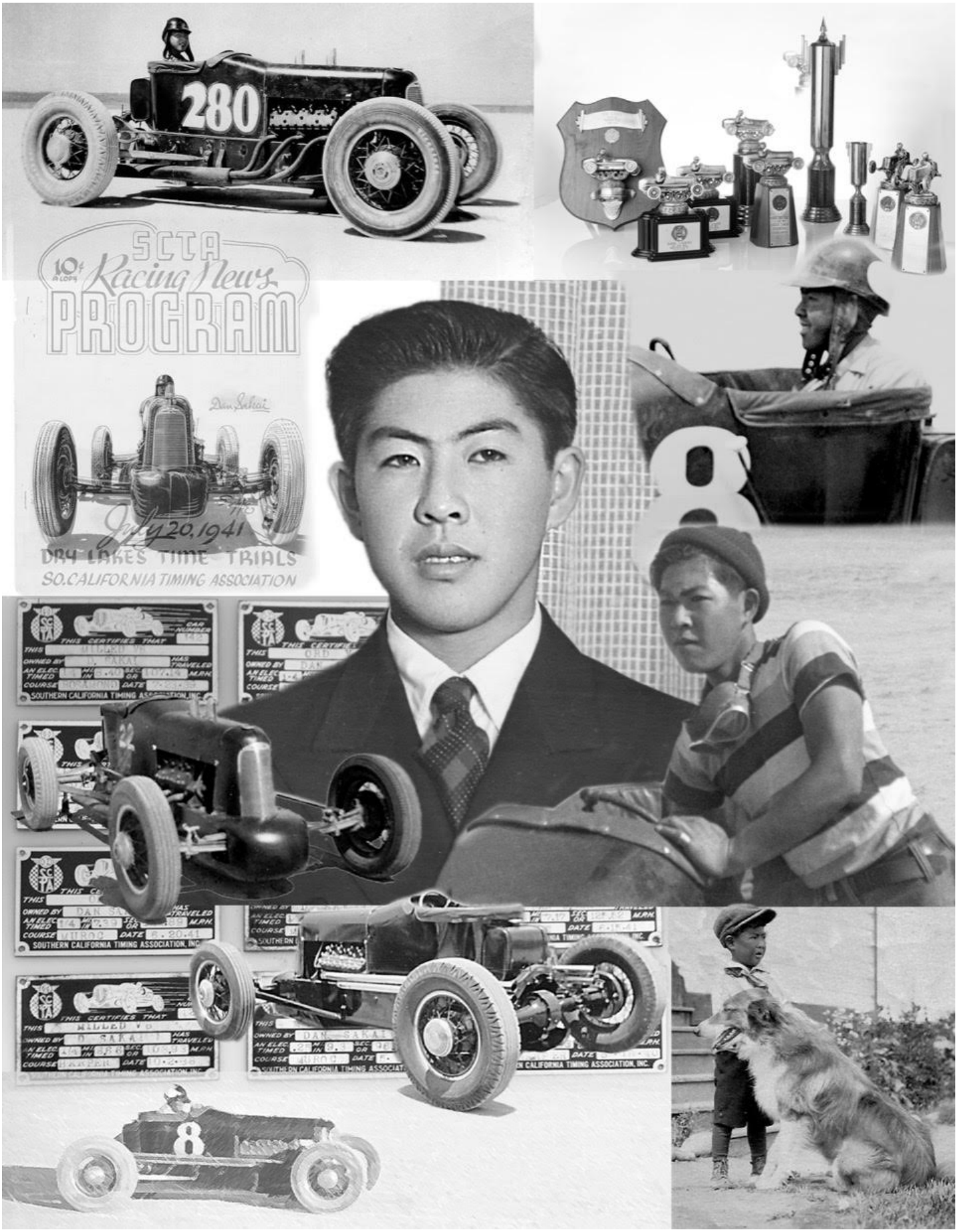
Danny worked at Tokio Florist, the family flower business on Los Feliz, and he was responsible for floral deliveries that included Cecil B. DeMille, Mae West, Mickey Rooney, and Olivia De Havilland, among others. Yuki was very understanding of his passion and gave him the opportunity to work on his cars behind the flower shop at night to fulfill his racing passion. Danny, a member of the Walkers Car Club, did most of the work on his car, but had help from friends Julian Doty, Yam Oka and Bobby Strahlman. You could also find the friends at Pat Campea's, or Gus Sommerfeldt's garages near the corner of Spaulding and Santa Monica Boulevard in Los Angeles.

Danny's '32 Ford was fitted with a Mercury V-8 Flat Head engine and competed under several different numbers, but the most recognizable was the #8 -- reportedly chosen because it was his current place in the racing standings. The body was handcrafted, every piece was fabricated from scratch except the reworked LaSalle grille. Besides the Mal Ord heads, many of the engine modifications were performed by Danny included a new manifold and ignition system. This car was his pride and joy evidenced by the always clean and polished chrome plated headers and hub caps. Sakai and his hot rodding pals "hung-out" mostly at the Hollywood area Dolores Drive-in on La Cienega and The Frying Pan on La Brea Ave.

Danny raced on Rosamond, Harpers, and Muroc dry lakes. On May 25, 1941, the Western Timing Association held its first Invitational Meet and Danny's Mercury powered V-8 took first place with a time of 118.27 for the day. Next, on June 15, 1941, Danny bumped his top time to 125.52 -- fastest time of the day. Danny ran his fastest career time of 126.58 at Muroc, on September 28, 1941. His car was featured on the cover of two SCTA Programs. There were also sketches of his car published by Gus Maanum, Veda Orr, and Eldon Snapp. It was in August of 1941 when Sakai turned 21 that his mother began to express some desire for him to begin considering his future. He wanted to go on racing, to earn a starting slot at Indianapolis, but also respected his mother's wishes and promised her that he was going to win "one more big race". The prize in this race, sponsored by Tommy Lee, was for a television, which Danny wanted to win for his mother.

On October 17, 1941, he was with friends on Forest Lawn Drive in Griffith Park riding a motorcycle that belonged to Bob West. As they often did, an impromptu street race begam against a friend driving a car. As the race ended, Danny stood up, turned around, lost control, and hit a pole; he was pronounced dead due to a cervical fracture -- a mere two months after his 21st birthday.

The Sakai and Nagai families acknowledge their appreciation to the late Julian Doty who graciously spoke with them in 2011 at the GAS UP sharing many fascinating stories of his friendship with Danny and their racing exploits.



Speedy Regards,



LOUISE ANN NOETH

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805.312.0893 - TALK/TEXT

CONTRIBUTOR: NEW YORK TIMES, WASHINGTON POST, SMITHSONIAN
R&D PARTNER: UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
JUDGE: SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
MEMBER: WAJ, SAH, AARWBA, DRY LAKES RACING HALL OF FAME

JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

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June 16, 2020

City of Los Angeles
Cultural Heritage Commission
200 North Spring St., Room 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: HCM #1198 (Sakai-Kozawa Residence / Tokio Florist and Pole Sign – 2718 Hyperion Ave.)

Dear Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission,

I write on behalf of my colleagues to share deep concern upon learning that the new owner of the former Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist (City of LA Historical Cultural Monument #1198) intends to demolish structures on the property that the Kozawa family constructed to facilitate their Tokio Florist business. These structures, which were determined character-defining features in the historic cultural monument nomination, convey the significance of the property.

Together with my colleagues in the curatorial, collections, and media arts departments at JANM, we have been working to preserve the history of Tokio Florist in numerous ways. We have long recognized the historical significance of this longstanding business for the Japanese American community in Los Angeles and were pleased to see that the historic cultural monument nomination centered on the cultural significance of the property. Our collective work has included acquiring material culture and home movies that capture the inner workings of Tokio Florist for our permanent collection, conducting oral history interviews with Sumi Kozawa, and documenting the property through film. While all of these methodologies are integral to preserving this important layer of history, they work in tandem with the structures on-site that were used to facilitate the Tokio Florist to interpret this history.

Tokio Florist, which operated at this property for decades, anchors several integral themes to Los Angeles's past. It is exemplary of a multigenerational Japanese American residence and family-owned and operated floral business. It also reflects the contributions of Japanese Angelenos to agriculture and horticulture. Moreover, the history of Tokio Florist highlights the entrepreneurial might of women. If these structures, which illustrate the historical significance of Tokio Florist are razed, this layer of history will be erased.

I hope you share my appreciation for the ways in which these structures on the site reflect the history of Tokio Florist. Please urge the current owners to think creatively about how to tangibly express and honor this layer of history in a meaningful way. I hope, too, that you will reiterate the importance of continuing to engage all of us who care deeply about this history.

Sincerely,



Kristen Hayashi, Ph.D.
Curator and Director of Collections
Japanese American National Museum