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SECONDARY SUBMISSIONS

ART A. SMITH COURTYARD APARTMENTS

SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL STYLE

BUILT 1930 DECLARED 2021

HISTORIC-CULTURAL
MONUMENT NO. 1230

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

100% 105832238 mm 8/3/2021 7X10 SL EMBLEM #4126

THE HISTORY OF BLACK FIREFIGHTERS IN LOS ANGELES

Year:	**Event:**
1781	City of Los Angeles is founded.
1850	Los Angeles is incorporated as a city.
1857	U.S. Supreme court rules in Dred Scott vs. Sandford. A black man has no rights that a white man is bound to respect because blacks are not citizens.
1886	Los Angeles Fire Department is organized as a paid Department.
1888	Sam Haskins, born a slave in 1840 from Virginia is listed in the census as an employed Fireman for the city of Los Angeles and assigned to Engine Company #4.
1892	Sam Haskins is appointed as a Call Man and assigned to Engine 2, making him the first black man hired by the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD).
1895	Sam Haskins is fatally injured on November 19, while responding down First Street to a fire call. When the steamer he was riding on, hit a bump in the road, Haskins lost his balance and fell between the steamer's boiler and the wheel. It took firemen and citizens ten minutes to remove the wheel. He was carried back to Engine 2's quarters where he died that night.
1896	U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* that "Separate But Equal" is the law of the land.
1897	George Bright is hired as the second black fireman in the LAFD.
1900	William Glenn is hired as the third black fireman in the LAFD.
1902	George Bright obtains the endorsement of the Second Baptist Church and is promoted to Lieutenant. This makes him the first black officer in the Department. All black firemen are segregated into Hose Company #4 on Loma Drive near Beverly Blvd. William Glenn leaves the Fire Department and transfers to the Police Department making him the third black Policeman in Los Angeles.

1903	The Civil Service system is created in the city of Los Angeles.
1906	Fireman Ben Anderson is credited for responding to a major chemical fire alone while the others were away from the station on break. The Los Angeles Times writes a hero's story for him.
1907	Fireman Ben Anderson retires on a disability pension when he is critically injured from an accident he sustained while responding to a fire.
1909	William Hall is appointed to the Los Angeles Fire Department.
1910	As more black firemen are hired, they are assigned to Hose Company #2 under the command of Lieutenant Frank Leiva, a Mexican-American.
1911	The city of Los Angeles adopts the Fire and Police Retirement Pension System.
1912	The Los Angeles Fire Department adopts the two-platoon shift system. Firemen from Hose Company #2 and Hose Company #4 combine.
	The Los Angeles Fire Department goes automotive with selective stations receiving automotive fire apparatus.
	The County of Los Angeles organizes the Forester and Fire Warden Office protecting the county areas of Los Angeles.
1916	William Hall promotes to Lieutenant and becomes the first black officer under Civil Service. He is assigned to command the "B" shift of Hose Company #4 serving along with George Bright who is in command of the "A" shift.
1918	Fireman Ben Anderson of Hose Company #4 dies from the injuries he sustained from an accident that disabled him in 1907. There were no provisions for widows and orphans at the time of his death. Anderson's death prompted city officials to create benefits for family members of all deceased LAFD Firefighters.
	Hose Company #4 gets an automotive fire engine eliminating horses.
1923	Lt. William Hall promotes to Captain.
	The Los Angeles County Fire Department organizes the Fire Protection Districts to protect unincorporated county areas.

1924 Hose Company # 4 becomes Engine 58 with a triple combination pumper.

Belmont High School is built across the street from Hose Company #4 / Engine 58, causing the Los Angeles Fire Department to move the black firemen to Engine #30 and Truck #11 at 1401 Central Avenue. The outgoing firemen from Station #30 trash the kitchen in protest of being moved out of their station. The Fire Chief orders all of the outgoing men back to clean up their mess and gives them a stern lecture.

Additional black firemen are hired to staff Truck Company # 11.

1927 LAFD eliminates the rank of Lieutenant and makes all station officers Captains.

LAFD creates the rescue ambulance service.

1931 Captain Hall passes the Battalion Chief's exam. He is told the following, "It's a shame you are not a white man, but there is no place nor plan for a colored Battalion Chief". Captain Hall retired at the end of this year.

1932 LAFD eliminates the separate designations of its Truck Companies and renames them after the Engine Companies they are housed with. Truck #11 becomes Truck #30.

1936 Engine #14 at 3401 Central Avenue is open to black firemen creating two additional captain and engineer positions along with ten additional firemen positions.

1940 Black firemen no longer replacing each other on an one for one basis. Arnett Hartsfield is hired and reports to Station #30 without going through the Fire Academy. The Fire Academy started training recruits on a 24-hour schedule; it was ruled unacceptable to have a black recruit stay overnight with the others.

1947 The "A" shift members of Stations #30 and #14 start the annual holiday party at Wince King's home. This gathering has never ceased and the annual gathering continues to this day.

1948 James Shern from Kansas is hired by the LAFD. He has a degree in chemistry and is later known as an innovator.

U.S. Supreme Court rules in Shelley vs. Kraemer: The justices rule that a court may not constitutionally enforce a "restrictive covenant" which prevents people of a certain race from owning or occupying property.

1949 New Station #14 is opened next door to old station. Additional apparatus is housed at Station #14, including a Wrecker (Heavy Utility) and a Salvage Unit.

1952 The Fire Prevention Bureau and the supply shops are open to black firemen. Garfield Tucker, James Shern and Earl Young are the first black Inspectors.

1953 Ed Garrison is the last black fireman hired prior to integration

James L. Garcia and Van Davis are hired as (LACoFD) Los Angeles County Fire's first "Black Firemen".

1954 U.S. Supreme Court rules on *Brown vs. Board of Education* that "Separate But Equal" is no longer the law of the land.

The Stentorians are organized at Stations #30 and #14.

1955 The Fire Chief is ordered by the Mayor to integrate the Fire Department. Problems occur in the city's fire stations with black and white firemen working together. Black firemen are subjected to second class treatment and are ostracized from station activities including:

Not allowed to eat with the other firefighters
Not allowed to drink coffee or read the station newspaper
Not allowed to fraternize with the other firefighters
Must stand four human spaces away from the other firemen during line ups and inspections
Not allowed to use the "little grape" or Grapevine, the station pay phone for personal calls
Not allowed to use the station dishware or utensils
Must sleep in the same bed designated for "Blacks Only" usually in the corner near the locker room door
Locker is usually placed near the toilet
Subjected to cruel jokes, harsh pranks with safety equipment, in addition to being subjected to verbal and physical harassment

At times, not allowed to respond to calls or participate in fire prevention activities
Constantly ignored by the other crew members
Persistently referred to as "Nigger"

1955 cont.

Arnett Hartsfield earns a law degree from U.S.C. and leads the effort to integrate the Fire Department.

Fireman Reynaldo Lopez takes a picture of the "White Adults" sign placed on the kitchen door of Station #46. This pictured is aired on the Channel 2 News by anchor Bill Stout. This causes an unfavorable light on the Fire Department.

Ernie Roberts now assigned to Station # 10, lays his head in human excrement, placed as a cruel joke. Fire Chief Alderson orders all blacks back to Central Avenue. He advises the Fire Commission that he cannot guarantee the safety of the black firemen in these [*hostile*] stations.

1956 The Fire Chief is fired for his lack of commitment to integrate the Department.

Bradley Garret and Tolbert Young are the first blacks hired after integration. Both are terminated unfairly during their academy training.

1957 Paul Orduna, a fireman from Omaha Nebraska is hired. He is the first black fireman to pass his probation after integration in the LAFD.

1961 Arnett Hartsfield retires.

James Shern promotes to Captain. He becomes the first Black Captain to be promoted since 1944.

1963 Mayor Sam Yorty issues a formal order to the Fire Department to "Act like a grown up Fire Department and start eating together." The "Organized Mess" rule is placed into effect that states all members shall eat together unless there is a medical condition that states otherwise.

1965 The Watts community of Los Angeles erupts in violence and fire as the Watts Riots commence. Bob Craig, Cecil McLinn, George Crommel and Bill Cotterell commander a rig and go into certain hot areas to fight fire.

Frank Harrison receives the Medal of Valor for saving the life of another firefighter trapped under a block wall. Harrison is the first black firefighter to receive the Medal of Valor.

1966 The LAFD adopts a new concept called the Task Force. A Task Force is a combination of a two piece Engine Company and a Truck Company under the direction of one leader, temporarily assigned together, to accomplish a specific mission.

1968 James Shern becomes the first black to promote to Battalion Chief

Fireman Robert Gladden dies of a heart attack while battling a fire in the Pacific Palisades area. His son Robert Gladden Jr. will join the LAFD in 1978.

1969 Hershel Clady joins the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

1970 Truck #30 moves to Station #14 and becomes Truck #14.

Ed Mcfaul is the first Black Firefighter Paramedic in the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

The International Association of Black Professional Firefighters is organized in Hartford, CT., linking all Black firefighter associations nationwide. David Floyd from the FDNY serves as the first President. Floyd was the first black fireman assigned to the elite Rescue 1 Squad Company of the FDNY. Captain Cecil McLinn attends this historical event representing the Stentorians, Black firefighters of Los Angeles.

Fireman Tom Collier is killed in the line of duty when Snorkel 3 tips over at a fire in downtown Los Angeles. He is fatally injured and two other firefighters are critically injured.

1972 The television show "Emergency" debuts on NBC. It depicts the lives of two Los Angeles County Firefighter Paramedics. Dispatcher Sam Lanier, known as the "Voice of Los Angeles", is shown each week dispatching Squad 51 to medical calls.

Actor Richard Roundtree known for his role in the movie "Shaft" portrays fireman Shelly Forsythe in the TV movie "Firehouse". Filmed in downtown Los Angeles at old Station # 23, Forsythe is the lone black fireman in a station where the tension is high because of his presence.

Battalion Chief James Shern retires and becomes the Fire Chief of the Pasadena, CA, Fire Department.

The LAFD adopts the rank of Captain II also known as the Task Force Commander. A Captain II is assigned to the Truck Company and is superior to a Captain I, who is assigned to an Engine Company. The first blacks to achieve the Captain II rank are:

Grady Bryant, James Parker, Terry Addison Sr., and Willie Patterson.

1973 Jackie Evans and Ken Smith are hired as the first black single function paramedics for the LAFD.

1974 The city of Los Angeles adopts the consent decree that calls for the hiring of 50% firefighters of color in all entry-level recruit classes.

1975 Hershel Clady becomes the first back fireman to promote to engineer on the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Chief James Shern is elected as the President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

1977 Hershel Clady promotes to Captain. This makes him the first black captain in the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

1978 The LAFD hires its first class of female paramedics. There were 6 in total. Carlesta Wells becomes the first black female paramedic in the LAFD.

All LAFD badges change the wording from FIREMAN to FIREFIGHTER.

1980 The Stentorians acquire old Station # 46 at 1409 W. Vernon Ave. as their office and training center. This is the same station that was the center of controversy in 1955 when Fireman Rey Lopez took the picture "White Adults" that was placed on the kitchen door to keep him out.

Davis Yost becomes the first black arson investigator in the LAFD.

Fire station # 30 closes

1983 Jimmy Hill is the number one candidate on the Captain's list for the LAFD.

1984 Congressman Agustus "Gus" Hawkins and Political Activist Adam Burton address the city fire department's hiring practices with Mayor Tom Bradley. It was discovered that the fire department was honoring the consent decree by hiring 50% people of color. However, they were terminating 50% of those hired before the academy training or their probation ended.

Fire Chief Manning was directed to do something about this. The Fire Department changed the training academy program and started a pre-training program for female firefighters that eventually included all firefighters.

Robert Lee becomes the first black chief officer when he promotes to Battalion Chief in the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

d'Lisa Daives becomes the first Black female firefighter hired by the LAFD. Michelle Banks becomes the second Black female paramedic for the LAFD. d'Lisa Daives and Banks are both assigned to Fire Station #34 in the Jefferson & Leimert Park sections of Los Angeles.

David Westfield becomes the first black arson investigator in the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

1985 Fire Station # 30 becomes Cultural Historic Landmark # 289.

A devastating fire in the Baldwin Hills area claims the lives of three people and destroys fifty-three homes. One of the fatalities is the mother of Firefighter Robert Gladden Jr.; the same firefighter that lost his father in 1968.

Brent Burton joins the Los Angeles County Fire Department at the age of 19, after three years with the LAFD's Explorer Program. Burton serves as the President of the African American Firefighter Museum and the past of the Stentorians of Los Angeles County.

1987 Captain Floyd Hoffman is placed in command of the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Recruitment Unit. A high number of candidates of color and females are hired during his tenure.

1988 Tonya Burns becomes the first black female hired by the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Veronie Steele is hired in the next class during this same year.

1989 The Los Angeles County Fire Department eliminates firefighter dispatchers and hires civilian uniform employees. Clyde Taylor, Betty Parker, Cheryl Patterson-Simms and Helen Ross are among the first black dispatchers hired.

1990 The Los Angeles County Fire union, Local 1014 accuses the Stentorians of cheating on the entry-level exam. The Fire Chief throws out the exam causing countless candidates to fail the new exam. The allegations were false and the union and the Stentorians have a strained relationship.

1991 The Executive Development Institute is created at HBCU Florida A & M University. This program was created by the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters as an alternative to the National Fire Academy. Historically, Black firefighters have not been successful in attending the NFA for various reasons. Later on, EDI was re-named in honor of Carl Holmes. Several members from the LAFD and the LACoFD graduated from the first class of this prestigious program. EDI continues to exist today.

1992 Los Angeles erupts in civil unrest as violence and fires erupt in South Los Angeles. Four LAPD officers were acquitted of beating motorist Rodney King. The violence starts in South LOS ANGELES and travels throughout metropolitan Los Angeles.

Tensions in certain fire stations are raised between some black and white firefighters over the situation of the causes and effects of the Los Angeles Riots. A black firefighter at LAFD Station # 9 alleges that someone placed urine in his Listerine bottle. A black firefighter at LAFD Station #61 nearly has an altercation over insensitive comments by some firefighters about black people.

1995 Two Los Angeles County Chief Officers are the topic of controversy when they order a picture of actor John Wayne down from the wall of the office at a Carson, CA, fire station. The Captain of the station challenges the order and sparks a divide again between black and white firefighters.

Robert Lee becomes Los Angeles County's first Black Deputy Fire Chief.

The Stentorians along with Attorney Melanie Lomax, hold a press conference in front of old Station #30 protesting the racist and sexist practices of the LAFD toward black and female firefighters.

A controversial video dubbed “female follies” is discovered and exposes the LAFD to widespread criticism. Fire Chief Don Manning retires amid the controversy.

1996 Jim Hill becomes the first black to serve as a Deputy Chief in the LAFD.

Firefighter Glenn Smith becomes the first Black helicopter pilot for the LAFD.

Fire Chief William Bamattre is appointed as the LAFD’s new Fire Chief.

1997 On December 13, The African American Firefighter Museum opens. Firefighter/lead Paramedic Michelle Banks serves as the first President. On the opening day, Fire Chief Bamattre issues a formal apology to the old Stentorians for enduring a terrible time during the integration of the LAFD during the mid 1950’s.

2000 Veronie Steele-Small becomes the first Black woman to promote to Captain in the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

The Inglewood Fire Department is annexed by the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Firefighter Paramedic Crystal Golden-Jefferson becomes Los Angeles County’s third black female firefighter.

2004 Firefighter Jamie Foster dies in the line of duty from injuries suffered during a vehicle accident. She becomes the first female to die in the line of duty on the LAFD.

The Stentorians of the City and County host the I.A.B.P.F.F. Convention and the traditional “Memorial March”, makes its way down Crenshaw Blvd., creating a truly historical moment in Los Angeles’ history.

Deceased Fireman Sam Haskins is finally given an honorable burial when a headstone is placed over his unmarked grave in Evergreen Cemetery. For years, Haskins was buried in an unmarked grave and it was not known that he was the first Black Fireman in Los Angeles until the Los Angeles Times uncovered the story and informed the African American Fire Fighter Museum.

Firefighter Don Greene becomes the first black firefighter assigned to the LAFD’s Tractor Company.

2005 Los Angeles County Firefighter Paramedic Crystal Golden-Jefferson dies from Lymphoma Cancer. She contracted this disease while serving on the Inglewood Fire Department prior to the Los Angeles County Fire Department annexing Inglewood, California’s Fire Department.

Captain Kwame Copper is the number one candidate on the Battalion Chief's list for the LAFD.

2006 A black firefighter alleges racial discrimination for a firehouse prank where his dinner was laced with dog food. The Los Angeles City Council originally agrees to compensate him $2.7 million. The Mayor vetoes the settlement after more information is revealed about the firefighter and his involvement in hazing incidents.

2006 Fire Chief Bamattre retires after more firefighters come forward and make allegations against the fire department's response to other serious incidents.

Firefighter Kris Larsen becomes the first black woman to promote to Captain in the LAFD.

2007 Assistant Chief Douglas Barry becomes the interim Fire Chief for the LAFD. Later on that same year, Barry is appointed by the mayor and confirmed unanimously as the permanent Fire Chief for the city of Los Angeles. This is the first time an African American has lead one of the largest fire departments in the nation.

Los Angeles was the last of the largest municipal cities in the country to appoint an African American as the Fire Chief. African Americans have served as the Fire Chief or top Commissioner in just about every major Department in the Country. New York, Chicago, San Diego, San Francisco, Atlanta, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Oakland, Seattle, Denver, just to name a few have all had African Americans as their top leader.

2008 LACoFD Deputy Fire Chief Daryl Osby is promoted to the position of Chief Deputy of Emergency Operations. This is the number 2 position in the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Chief Deputy Osby is now the highest ranking Black chief officer in the history of the LACoFD.

2009 Fire Chief Doug Barry retires. Battalion Chief Millage Peaks, an African American and a 33 year veteran of the LAFD becomes the next Fire Chief to serve the City of Los Angeles.

2011 Daryl L. Osby, second in command of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, is appointed by the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors as the Fire Chief of the Department. He is the first African American to serve as the Fire Chief in the history of the Department.

2011 LAFD Fire Chief Millage Peaks retires and Assistant Chief Brian Cummings, is appointed by the Mayor to the position of Fire Chief. Chief Cummings is the son of the late retired LAFD Engineer Lou Cummings, who served on Central Avenue during the days of segregation.

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August 16, 2021

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chc@lacity.org

RE: Support of HCM Nomination of Bank of America (CHC-2021-6155-HCM)

Dear President Barron and Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

I am writing to you on behalf of the board of directors of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans for Historic Preservation in support of the HCM nomination of the Bank of America (CHC-2020-6155-HCM). We fully support City staff recommendation to take the property under further investigation as a potential HCM. We are confident that staff, upon conducting these further investigations, will confirm that the site meets the criteria and warrants this Commission's recommendation to City Council for HCM status.

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

The Bank of America Chinatown branch, designed by architects Gilbert Leong and Richard Layne Tom in 1971 with an addition in 1977, is significant as the first national bank to open a branch in Chinatown reflecting the growth of the local Chinese community during the period. As the first national bank branch in Chinatown, the opening of the Chinatown branch of Bank of America solidified the increasing strength of the local Chinese American community and provided new financial opportunities. The Chinatown branch of Bank of America is only one of two banks in Chinatown that opened post-World War II and is still in its original location.

The Chinatown branch of Bank of America is also significant for its unique architectural design combining Asian Eclectic and Late Modern styles. Designed by noted Chinese American architects Gilbert Leong and Richard Layne Tom, the bank's design blends the Modernist horizontal orientation, minimal ornamentation, and flat roofs with "classical Chinese elements," including a roof built from imported jade green tile over wood beams, modern Asian-beamed ceilings, and contemporary designs of Chinese characters. Leong and Tom's designs are significant as they departed from the more common Early Modern Slab style use in other Bank of America branches designs.

APIAHiP seeks to elevate local and statewide efforts to document and preserve Asian and Pacific Islander Americans stories. I strongly urge you and the Cultural Heritage Commission to support the nomination of the Bank of American (Chinatown branch) as a Historic Cultural Monument.

Sincerely,

michellegmagalong

Michelle G. Magalong, PhD

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM – Kuromi Ito Property

1 message

Amy Gustincic <amygustincic@gmail.com> Tue, Aug 17, 2021 at 1:54 PM
To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, Mashael Majid <mashael.majid@lacity.org>

Dear Commissioner Milofsky,

I am writing to you in support of the nomination of the Kuromi-Ito Residence (1979-1991 N. Alexandria Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90027) for Historic-Cultural Monument status.

The long history of the Kuromi-Ito family is integral to the themes of Los Angeles' Japanese and Japanese American cultural, social and economic past on a local, state and national level. As one of the oldest horticultural families, it's important to preserve and protect the site of the Kuromi-Ito family, alongside other important early Japanese American sites in Los Angeles.

Thank you for your consideration.

Amy Gustincic
Los Feliz resident

LFIA advocacy and action for Los Feliz

2021–2022

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221 No. Figueroa St. (Suite 1350)
Los Angeles, CA 90011

CHC-2021-6319-HCM
Support for Kuromi-Ito Residence

August 16, 2021

Dear Commissioners:
Los Feliz Improvement Association (LFIA), the advocacy group for all residents of Los Feliz, is writing in support of the Kuromi-Ito Residence at 1991 N. Alexandria Avenue to be designated a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM).

Why is it important to landmark the Kuromi-Ito Residence?

- Kiyo Kuromi, a pioneering woman entrepreneur, and her family played a key role in shaping the wholesale/retail floral industry in Los Feliz and Los Angeles for nearly 100 years. This is an important chapter of our Japanese-American history that shouldn't be erased.
- She, along with the Kuromi clan, built and rebuilt (following WWII) a thriving flower business in spite of many obstacles. The family matriarch purchased the 1923 Spanish Colonial Revival house at 1991 N. Alexandria Ave. in 1963. This was not long after the repeal of the Alien Land Law in the mid '50s.
- The Kuromi-Ito Family's rich cultural heritage tells the story of the Japanese family's struggles and challenges to follow the American Dream.
- Kiyo and her family cultivated the sweet peas on leased land above Los Feliz Boulevard and sold flowers at their small Flower View Gardens stand that became a popular destination for motorists.
- The Kuromi-Ito Residence was one of the earliest homes built in historic Los Feliz Square (as identified by SurveyLA) in the early 1920s. As one of the oldest horticultural families in Los Feliz, it's important to preserve and protect the Kuromi-Ito Residence.

The LFIA enthusiastically supports the designation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,
Amy Gustincic



President, LFIA

CC: Melissa.jones@lacity.org
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ACTAONLINE.ORG

August 17, 2021

Barry Milofsky, President
Cultural Heritage Commission
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street Room 1010
Los Angeles, CA 90012-4801

RE: **Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM – Kuromi Ito Property**

Dear Commissioner Milofsky,

I am writing to you in support for the inclusion of the Kuromi-Ito Residence, located at 1979-1991 N. Alexandria Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027, in the list of Historic Cultural Monuments for the City of Los Angeles.

I serve as the Executive Director of the statewide Alliance for California Traditional Arts which works "to Ensure California's future holds California's Past" through the preservation and support of our state's living cultural heritage. I first learned about the Kuromi-Ito family In 1991, when I worked as the program director of the Los Angeles County Library's " Shades of LA" oral history and photo collection project which worked to gather critical history from LA's Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities for almost a decade. Our team of LA photo historians identified Aiko/Alice Ito (1919-2011), the daughter of Kiyo and A.H. Kuromi, as one of the priority subjects for the community oral histories because the Kuromi-Ito family's experience is integral to the themes of Los Angeles' Japanese settlement patterns and LA's Japanese American cultural, social and economic past and Mrs. Ito had such rich documentation through photographs and family stories to illustrate this critical and often hidden history. (Please see: https://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/photo-collection/shades-la)

Some of the major touchstones of the Kuromi-Ito family timeline included:

- Kiyo Kuromi was born in 1899 in Japan's Shiman Prefecture, and at the age of six years old, in 1905, she immigrated to California with her parents.
- In 1917, the Kuromi family secured a lease from the William Mead estate for a small farm located at 5149 Los Feliz Boulevard where they lived and operated a floral business and a small stand called Flower View Gardens.

- In 1919 Kuromi married her cousin A.H. (Harue) Kuromi (1895-1946), and they settled on Kiyo's family flower fields on Los Feliz Boulevard where they lived in a building on the property. In time, Kiyo and A.H. had three children Aiko/Alice (1919-2011), Isamu/Ise (1922-1996), and Hitoshi/Yoke (1925-1970).
- Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Kiyo and the rest of the Kuromi family were sent to the Santa Anita Assembly Center (site of the Santa Anita Racetrack) before being forcibly relocated to the Gila River Relocation Center in Arizona From 1942-1945.
- When the family returned to Los Feliz after the war and incarceration in 1945, only one acre of their previous land was available to lease, and Kiyo and Harue reopened Flower View Gardens at 5149 Los Feliz Boulevard in 1946.
- Shortly thereafter, Harue passed away here at home. Later, the William Mead property was subdivided into Los Feliz Estates. In 1962, the Kuromi family opened a new full-service floral shop and office also called Flower View Gardens at 1801 N. Western Avenue.
- Following the opening of the new location, Kiyo Kuromi purchased a portion of the subject property located at 1991 N. Alexandria Avenue where she lived until her death in 1980. The family business was left to Kiyo's daughter, Alice Ito, and her husband Arthur, which they ran until Flower View Gardens was sold in 2000.

It was a special privilege to record Alice Ito's oral history for Los Angeles Public Library and now thirty years later, this documentation provides a compelling case to support the application for the Kuromi-Ito home to the list of Historic Cultural Monuments for the City of Los Angeles. As one of the oldest horticultural families, it's important to preserve and protect the site of the Kuromi-Ito family, alongside other important early Japanese American sites in Los Angeles.

This monument will be an important recognition, not just to the Ito-Kuromi descendants, but to the larger story of resilience, community contributions and belonging for all Angelinos.

In reflecting on my question during our recorded interview about how L.A. has changed during her lifetime, Alice Ito responded:

"Now we have many hundreds and thousands of immigrants from all over the world and the climate has changed drastically in our neighborhood …As citizens we have to learn the cultures of all these people who are here. However, it's up to us to learn… As business people…we're confronted with many of these problems because we don't know, but I think in time we'll be able to understand each other a little better."

The designation of the Kuromi-Ito home as a Historic Cultural Monument is a step to help us "know each other" within the deep and diverse populous of our city. The Kuromi-Ito home is set within Survey LA's identified historic

Los Feliz Square District and is identified with lives of the historic personages, such as Kiyo Kuromi and her family, relevant on a national, state and local community level. The significant contributions of the Kuromi-Ito family were significant on a broad cultural, economic and within the the social history of our nation, state and local community of Hollywood/Los Feliz. Please nominate the Kuromi-Ito residence as the next Japanese American Historic Cultural Monument in the City of Los Angeles.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Amy Kitchener
Executive Director + Co-founder
Alliance for California Traditional Arts

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Support for the Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination of the Kuromi-Ito Residence (CHC 2021-6319-HCM)

1 message

Carolina Roque <croque@jaccc.org> Fri, Aug 13, 2021 at 6:00 PM
To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, mashael.majid@lacity.org
Cc: bcurranjr@gmail.com, christy@christymcavoy.com, ka51608@usc.edu, Elizabeth Lovins <ealovins@yahoo.com>, amy.gustincic@lfia.org

Dear Cultural Heritage Commission,

I am writing to you, on behalf of Patricia Wyatt, President & CEO of Japanese American Cultural & Community Center (JACCC), in support of the inclusion of the Kuromi-Ito Residence, located at 1979-1991 N. Alexandria Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027, in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments for the City of Los Angeles.

Enclosed is our formal letter of support.
Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at croque@jaccc.org. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best regards,
Carolina Roque
--

JACCC
日米文化会館
Carolina Roque | カロリナ・ロケ (she/her pronouns)
Development Associate
Japanese American Cultural & Community Center (JACCC)
244 S. San Pedro St., Los Angeles, CA 90012
email: croque@jaccc.org
office phone: (213) 628-2725 ext. 128
jaccc.org | follow us on: facebook | instagram | twitter

note: please consider the environment before printing this email

Letter of Support — Inclusing of Kuromi-Ito Residence.pdf
190K

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Letter of Support for Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM – Kuromi Ito Property

1 message

dnsdecarlo <dnsdecarlo@aol.com> Mon, Aug 16, 2021 at 9:38 AM
To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org
Cc: christy@christymcavoy.com, bcurranjr@gmail.com, ka51068@usc.edu, any.gustincic@lfia.org, nyla@discoverhollywood.com

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S8 Active, an AT&T 5G Evolution capable smartphone

August 16, 2021

Barry Milofsky, President
Cultural Heritage Commission
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street Room 1010
Los Angeles, CA 90012-4801

RE: **Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM – Kuromi Ito Property**

Dear President Milofsky,

I am writing to you in support for the inclusion of the Kuromi-Ito Residence, located at 1979-1991 N. Alexandria Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027, in the list of Historic Cultural Monuments for the City of Los Angeles.

The Kuromi-Ito home is set within one of the five, Survey LA's identified historic Los Feliz Square District and is identified with lives of the historic personages, such as Kiyo Kuromi and her family, relevant on a national, state and local community level. As one of the earliest horticultural Japanese families to settle in Los Feliz/Hollywood, they have significantly contributed to the local history, economy and broad cultural and social history of Los Feliz. Why destroy and further erase Japanese heritage in this way?

The development happening right now doesn't bring communities together. Established neighborhoods that already have their communal grounds and footpaths,are being carelessly destroyed.

As a long time resident and small business owner, i love living in such a beautiful neighborhood, with such great history. The key aesthetic and neighborhood defining qualities of Los Feliz and Hollywood are being ruined. This is not progress. They are tearing down existing affordable housing in Los Feliz and Hollywood,

at an alarming rate. Historic Los Feliz and associated areas are as important as Beachwood Canyon and Whitley Heights.

And the last minute surprise changes, that CD4 Nithya Raman made to the HCPU, was made without any kind of community outreach.

Again, please support this nomination.

Sincerely,

Denise DeCarlo
2867 Beachwood Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90068

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Kuromi-Ito Residence.

2 messages

Darryl Webster <darrylmcfc@gmail.com> Tue, Aug 17, 2021 at 8:25 AM
To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, mashael.majid@lacity.org
Cc: Elizabeth Lovins <ealovins@yahoo.com>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commission,

I am writing to you in support for the inclusion of the Kuromi-Ito Residence, located at 1979-1991 N. Alexandria Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027, in the list of Historic Cultural Monuments for the City of Los Angeles.

Barring any significant plans for affordable housing, I can't see the benefit in demolishing a beacon of such historic and cultural significance. Los Feliz's rich history means a lot to its residents both old and new and has long helped attract a large number of visitors from all over the world. Again, unless the plan is to create significant affordable housing on this land, I'll hope the Commission will se fit to grant this residence a historical designation. Thank you for your time and for all the hard work you put in on behalf of the City of Los Angeles, its residents and all who travel to and love the city as much as I do.

Best Wishes,

Darryl Webster.

Mashael Majid <mashael.majid@lacity.org> Tue, Aug 17, 2021 at 10:35 AM
To: Darryl Webster <darrylmcfc@gmail.com>
Cc: chc@lacity.org, Melissa Jones <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, Elizabeth Lovins <ealovins@yahoo.com>

Hi Darryl,

The Council Office is in receipt of your email regarding the HCM nomination of the Kuromi-Ito Property at 1979-1991 North Alexandria Avenue.

Kind regards,
Mashael
[Quoted text hidden]
--
Mashael Majid
Planning Director
councildistrict4.lacity.org

NITHYA RAMAN | Los Angeles City Councilmember 4th District

******

DISCLOSURE: All emails sent to or from this account (including any attachments) are subject to the California Public Records Act and may be released upon request.

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Regarding a historic property

1 message

Eliza Chobanyan <elizachobanyan@gmail.com> Tue, Aug 17, 2021 at 10:46 AM
To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>

Hi, I'm writing to you with regards to a property that falls under the city of LA Cultural Heritage Commission.

Is there a phone number I can call somewhere I can visit in person to get details on what type of changes I can make on a property that I'm interested in purchasing?

I have a few really good ideas with the place and would like to know if it is allowed on such a property.

Please advise and feel free to contact me directly at (323) 394-8000.

Thank you,
Eliza Chobanyan

LITTLE TOKYO
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

August 17, 2021

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

RE: CHC-2021-6319-HCM

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

On behalf of the Little Tokyo Historical Society I am writing in support of a City of Los Angeles Cultural-Historic Monument (HCM) designation for the Kuromi-Ito Residence Property (Los Feliz Flower View Gardens Family, 1979-1991 No. Alexandria Avenue).

The application represents of one of the earliest Japanese families who settled in Los Angeles at the beginning of the 20th century and whose family owned and operated the iconic "Flower View Gardens," retail flower business in Los Feliz, established in 1917. The history of the Kuromi-Ito family is integral to the themes of Los Angeles' Japanese and Japanese American cultural, social and economic past on a local, state and national level. Kiyo Kuromi, the family matriarch and entrepreneur, the entire Kuromi-Ito family, and the nominated site contributed to the early development of the Los Feliz/Hollywood area. Moreover, as one of the oldest horticultural families, it is important to preserve and protect the site of the Kuromi-Ito family, alongside other important early Japanese American sites in Los Angeles. For these reasons, the Kuromi-Ito Residence exemplifies the broad cultural, economic, and social history of the Los Angeles region and the early history of Los Feliz/Hollywood.

We hope that you also share our appreciation of the Kuromi-Ito Residence Property in conveying the larger history of our city and region, and that you will support the proposed HCM designation for the property.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Okamura
President

319 E. Second Street, #203, Los Angeles, CA 90012-4250 • littletokyohs@gmail.com
www.littletokyohs.org

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Support for the Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination of the Kuromi-Ito Residence (CHC 2021-6319-HCM

1 message

John Bengtson <john@silentechoes.net> Mon, Aug 16, 2021 at 4:39 PM
To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>, "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "mashael.majid@lacity.org" <mashael.majid@lacity.org>
Cc: Brian Curran <bcurranjr@gmail.com>, Christy McAvoy <christy@christymcavoy.com>, "ka51608@usc.edu" <ka51608@usc.edu>, Elizabeth Lovins <ealovins@yahoo.com>, "amy.gustincic@lfia.org" <amy.gustincic@lfia.org>

This is silent film historian John Bengtson voicing my support of the nomination of the Kuromi-Ito Residence.

Long forgotten, a tight-knit Japanese enclave once thrived in early Hollywood along the 1500 block of Cahuenga between Sunset and Selma, confirmed by numerous listings in the 1910s city directories and 1919 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.

As reported at this link below, this community once stood directly south from where dozens of silent movies were made, and was first revealed by discovering Buster Keaton ran past the Toribuchi Grocery (1546 Cahuenga) during his comedy short *The Goat* (1921).

I have since discovered Douglas Fairbanks, founding member of United Artists and the Motion Picture Academy, filmed scenes in front of a modest Japanese employment agency once standing nearby at 6400 Sunset during *Flirting With Fate* (1916), and other silent stars filmed there too.

So much Japanese history was lost, especially for the Issei (first generation) who once established this unique forgotten community in Hollywood. We owe it to them, and ourselves, to preserve what remains of their legacy.

https://silentlocations.com/2019/11/20/silent-hollywoods-japanese-enclave/

Thank you for your consideration,

John Bengtson

janm
JAPANESE AMERICAN
NATIONAL MUSEUM

100 N. Central Avenue Los Angeles, California 90012
TEL 213.625.0414 **FAX** 213.625.1770
WEB janm.org ● janmstore.com ● DiscoverNikkei.org

August 17, 2021

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

RE: Support for Historic Cultural Monument Nomination of the Ozawa Boarding House/Obayashi Employment Agency, CHC-2021-6319-HCM

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of the Japanese American National Museum in support of a historic cultural monument designation for the Kuromi-Ito Property at 1979-1991 N. Alexandria Ave.

This property, which Kiyo Kuromi purchased in 1960, is notable since her identities as a Japanese immigrant, woman, and widow caused land ownership to seem beyond reach. An HCM designation for the Kuromi-Ito property will bring attention to the long history of how *dejure* and *defacto* discrimination around property ownership affected Japanese immigrants into the post-WWII period, decades after they arrived in this country. Kuromi's ability to navigate these obstacles on her own underscored her independent spirit and entrepreneurial might as she successfully operated Flower View Gardens, a nursery in Los Feliz. Kuromi and her friend, Yuki Sakai, who operated nearby Tokio Florist (HCM #1198), were similar in that respect.

The Kuromi-Ito property anchors the stories and experiences of seemingly ordinary Angelenos who contributed to the growth and development of the city. Given that much of the scholarship on Japanese American communities has focused on neighborhoods in and around Little Tokyo, illuminating the history of the Los Feliz area is significant. Moreover, this property is notable since it expands the narrative of the Japanese American experience by revealing what it took for former incarcerees to rebuild their lives and their livelihoods in the early postwar period. In the years following the wartime incarceration, Japanese immigrants and their descendants returned to face the same discrimination and obstacles that previously limited their social mobility.

While a designation will help to tell the experience of Japanese Angelenos, it will also underscore the achievements of women in Los Angeles—two categories that are underrepresented within the existing list of HCMs designated across the city. I hope you share my appreciation for the significance of this property in conveying the larger history of our city and region, and that you will support the proposed HCM designation.

Respectfully yours,



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

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Letter of support for Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM- Kuromi Ito Property

1 message

Kathy Metz <metz.kathy@yahoo.com> Sat, Aug 14, 2021 at 2:31 PM
To: "mashael.majid@lacity.org" <mashael.majid@lacity.org>, "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>, "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>
Cc: "burranir@gmail.com" <burranir@gmail.com>, "christy@christymcavoy.com" <christy@christymcavoy.com>, "ka51608@usc.edu" <ka51608@usc.edu>, "ealovins@yahoo.com" <ealovins@yahoo.com>, "amy.gustincic@lfia.org" <amy.gustincic@lfia.org>

Barry Milofsky, President
Cutural Heritage commission
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street Room1010
Los Angeles , CA 90012-4801

Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM- Kuromi Ito Property

Dear President Milofsky,

I am writing in support for the inclusion of the Kuromi Ito Residence, located at 1979-1991 N. Alexandria Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90027, in the list of Historic Cultural Monuments for the City of Los Angeles. I am a long time resident of Los Feliz , A beautiful Community, with a rich and diverse cultural History which i believe needs to be protected. The Kuromi Residence is such a valuable part of that History. Please support saving it . Sincerely, Kathy Metz, 2056 Rodney Dr. Los Angeles, Ca 90027

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Support for the Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination of the Kuromi-Ito Residence (CHC 2021-6319-HCM

1 message

Leslie Kita <kitales@gmail.com> Fri, Aug 13, 2021 at 11:36 PM
To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, mashael.majid@lacity.org
Cc: bcurranjr@gmail.com, christy@christymcavoy.com, ka51608@usc.edu, ealovins@yahoo.com, amy.gustincic@lfia.org

Please support the historic-cultural monument nomination of the Kuromi-Ito Residence. Thank you.

Leslie (Ito) Kita

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Saving Los Feliz History

1 message

M K <melodymking@gmail.com> Fri, Aug 13, 2021 at 5:13 PM
To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, mashael.majid@lacity.org
Cc: bcurranjr@gmail.com, Amy Gustincic <amy.gustincic@lfia.org>, Elizabeth Lovins <ealovins@yahoo.com>, christy@christymcavoy.com, ka51608@usc.edu

Barry Milofsky, President
Cultural Heritage Commission
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street Room 1010
Los Angeles, CA 90012-4801

RE: **Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM – Kuromi Ito Property**

Dear Commissioner Milofsky,

I am writing to you to support the inclusion of the Kuromi-Ito Residence, located at 1979-1991 N. Alexandria Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027, in the list of Historic Cultural Monuments for the City of Los Angeles.

In the last few months, there has been a disturbing trend of demolitions in Los Feliz, including in the Los Feliz Square District, identified as a historic district by Survey LA. Crosstown statistics show that during the first six months of the year, there were 21 demolition permits issued, a 22.2% increase from the previous six months. Los Feliz ranks Number 36 out of 110 neighborhoods in the city for demolition permits for these same months. This is reflective of our new city councilwoman's agenda to overdevelop our area.

In addition to destroying historic homes, this leads to increased squatting and crime, and could very well impact our economy. The Kuromi-Ito home itself had to have police remove squatters, one being a member of a local gang. Los Feliz is a major filming location because of its diversity of architecture and its ability to be any city at any time in history. We need this money in our economy. And the environmental impact of destroying these older homes is also a consideration, as they may have asbestos or lead paint which creates toxic dust. We have already seen this happen with the destruction of 4747 Ambrose.

We've already lost so many homes, it would be wonderful to be able to save this home, as the Kuromi-Ito family's story is like that of so many other Asian families' World War II stories which go untold.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Melody King

Board of Directors

Michelle Magalong, PhD
President
Washington, DC

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Hagåtña, Guam

M. Rosalind Sagara
Riverside, CA

Jason Sarmiento
West Sacramento, CA

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

August 16, 2021

Cultural Heritage Commission, City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles City Hall
10th Floor, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
chc@lacity.org

RE: Support of HCM Nomination of Kuromi-Ito Property (CHC-2021-6319-HCM)

Dear President Barron and Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

I am writing to you on behalf of the board of directors of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans for Historic Preservation in support of the HCM nomination of the Kuromi-Ito Property (CHC-2021-6319-HCM). We fully support City staff recommendation to take the property under further investigation as a potential HCM. We are confident that staff, upon conducting these further investigations, will confirm that the site meets the criteria and warrants this Commission's recommendation to City Council for HCM status.

The mission statement 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.

This property is associated with Kiyo Kuromi as an historic personage due to her experience as an early Japanese American female entrepreneur and head of a prominent Japanese American family in Los Angeles. Although Kiyo and her family's history and achievements are documented in repositories like the Huntington Library, Los Angeles Public Library, and Japanese American National Museum, 1979-1991 N. Alexandria Avenue remains the only historic site purchased and occupied by her.

As the matriarch of the extended Kuromi clan, Kiyo Kuromi presided over the legacy business known as Flower View Gardens in the Los Feliz area of Hollywood. Perservering through systemic racism in immigration policies and incarceration during World War II, she built and rebuilt a thriving enterprise which supplied floral arrangements to the entertainment industry as well as sustained and distinguished her extended family until 2000.

In Los Angeles and across the nation, very few sites associated with Asian American history are designated landmarks at the local, state, or national levels. If designated, the Kuromi-Ito Property would become the thirteenth—of more than 1100 City of Los Angeles HCM designations— that reflects the rich history and contributions of the Japanese American community in the region, which established roots beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, this site reflects how immigrant groups and women of color have significantly contributed to both the city as well as, the nation's history of ethnic entrepreneurship. This site was included in the City's recent (and award-winning) *Asian Americans in Los Angeles Historic Context Statements*, which is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

APIAHiP seeks to elevate local and statewide efforts to document and preserve Asian and Pacific Islander Americans stories. I strongly urge you and the Cultural Heritage Commission to support the nomination of the Kuromi-Ito Property as a Historic Cultural Monument.

Sincerely,

michellegmagalong

Michelle G. Magalong, PhD

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

RE: Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM – Kuromi Ito Property

1 message

Moni Ritchie Hadley <moni500@gmail.com> Sun, Aug 15, 2021 at 9:57 PM
To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, mashael.majid@lacity.org
Cc: bcurranjr@gmail.com, christy@christymcavoy.com, ka51608@usc.edu, Elizabeth Lovins <ealovins@yahoo.com>, amy.gustincic@lfia.org

Moni Ritchie Hadley
PO Box 50312
Los Angeles, CA 90050

August 15, 2021

Barry Milofsky, President
Cultural Heritage Commission
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street Room 1010
Los Angeles, CA 90012-4801

RE: **Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM – Kuromi Ito Property**

Dear President Milofsky,

I am writing to you in support of the inclusion of the Kuromi-Ito Residence, located at 1979-1991 N. Alexandria Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027, in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments for the City of Los Angeles.

The Kuromi-Ito home is set within Survey LA's identified historic Los Feliz Square District and is identified with lives of the historic personages, such as Japanese American, Kiyo Kuromi and her family, relevant on a national, state, and local community level. Further, the significant contributions of the Kuromi-Ito family are important on a broad cultural, economic, and social history to our local Los Feliz community and beyond.

As a Japanese American, I care deeply about the preservation of the buildings and neighborhoods that identify our history and who we are. The materials, architecture, designs, and creations of the past cannot be recreated. We must hold on to what little we have left of the past so we can study and remember our roots. Please take into consideration that much of the history of the Japanese influence here in Los Angeles has been erased due to the evacuation to the internment camps.

The generations that follow mine deserve to experience the rich culture and history of the Los Feliz neighborhood. There is nothing that holds more value than a window into the past. And that is what this historic home provides the future. Please save this home!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Moni Ritchie Hadley



Moni Ritchie Hadley
Author of THE STAR FESTIVAL

https://www.moniritchie.com

Discover HOLLYWOOD MAGAZINE

August 16, 2021

Cultural Heritage Commission
Department of Planning
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: KUROMI-ITO PROPERTY
CHC-2021-6319-HCM CEQA: ENV-2021-6320-CE

Dear Commissioners,

This letter is to wholeheartedly support the declaration of the above-referenced property as a cultural monument in the City of Los Angeles.

The story of the Kuromi-Ito family epitomizes the plight of thousands of Japanese-Americans who were interred, removed from their homes and lost their businesses in the aftermath of the Japanese bombing and subsequent declaration of war with Japan. The story is well-documented in this application and it is an amazing story of overcoming insurmountable obstacles and the resilience of the human spirit.

I'm honored to say that through involvement with the community of Hollywood, I knew Arthur Ito. He was a gracious and outstanding contributing member of Los Feliz and the Hollywood business community.

Years ago, while caring for my neighbor, Jane Gage, she shared this story. She and Ray, her husband, happened to be visiting friends and vacationing in Hawaii on December 7, 1941. They were stranded there for months until they could return to the US. Ray enlisted in the Navy and one thing led to another and Ray was assigned to Illinois to study Japanese. One day, Jane told me, she was surprised and delighted to bump into her friend from Los Feliz, Aiko "Alice" Kuromi Ito, who, like Jane, had accompanied her husband. As the quicks and turns of life go, Ray Gage happened to serve as an interpreter at the surrender of the Japanese at war's end. Jane and Ray Gage have both passed away leaving no children to share this extraordinary story.

Soon, the building that was Flower View Gardens Florist will succumb to development, Flower View Gardens Farm exists only in old photographs, the one remaining structure that encapsulates the story of an unprecedented occurrence in our city's history and is an important legacy not only to a family whose loss and suffering did not diminish their American dream is their former home on Alexandria Street.

The house is not nearly as grand as the story nor the fortitude, sacrifice and dedication it took to acquire it. Yet, it is important to the cultural fiber of the community of Los Feliz, essential to the history of Los Angeles' Japanese-American community and must be preserved.

Sincerely,

Nyla Arslanian

Home address:
2489 N. Edgemont Street
Los Angeles, CA 90027

Nyla Arslanian
Editor

cc: Councilmember Nithya Raman

August 13, 2021

Mr. Barry Milofsky, President
Cultural Heritage Commission
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring St., Room 1010
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM – Kuromi Ito Property

Dear Commissioner Milofsky,

I am writing to you in support for the inclusion of the Kuromi-Ito Residence, located at 1979-1991 N. Alexandria Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027, in the list of Historic Cultural Monuments for the City of Los Angeles.

The historic property consists of a 1923 Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style, significant for its association with early Japanese American settlement patterns. In 1963, the property was purchased by Kiyo Kuromi (1899-1980), a Japanese American female entrepreneur from Shimane Prefecture, Japan. Her daughter, Aiko Ito (1980-2006) followed in her parents' footsteps of growing flowers, and with her husband, founded the Flower View Gardens which served television shows and movies in Hollywood. Ito was a pivotal figure in the community having been the first chairman of the California State Florist Association, a member of the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD) among many others. In 1992, she was inducted into the Society of American Florists Hall of Fame. Following her passing, the home was inherited by her grandson, James Ito, who owned the property until it was sold in 2021.

The Kuromi-Ito home is set within Survey LA's identified historic Los Feliz Square District and is identified with lives of the historic personages, such as Kiyo Kuromi and her family. The family and their significant contributions remain relevant on a broad, cultural, and economic level within a national, state, and local community of Hollywood/Los Feliz. Please nominate the Kuromi-Ito residence as the next Japanese American Historic Cultural Monument in the City of Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Wyatt
President & CEO

Connect Create Collaborate

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Please save this historic house: 1979-1991 N Alexandria Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027

1 message

Robin Russin <russin@sbcglobal.net> Thu, Aug 12, 2021 at 5:09 PM
To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, mashael.majid@lacity.org
Cc: ealovins@yahoo.com, ka51068@usc.edu

I am weighing in as a neighbor:

Save the Kuromi-Ito Home at 1979-1991 N Alexandria Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM – Kuromi Ito Property

Thank you for your attention to preserving this beautiful and historic house!

Best,

Robin Russin
Melbourne Ave.
Los Feliz 90027

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Case No. CHC-2021-6319 HCM – Kuromi Ito Property

1 message

Shana Fleiss <shanafleiss@gmail.com> Sun, Aug 15, 2021 at 6:08 AM
To: melissa.jones@lacity.org, chc@lacity.org, mashael.majid@lacity.org
Cc: ealovins@yahoo.com, ka51068@usc.edu

To All Concerned-

I am writing this letter in support of preserving the Kuromi Ito Property on 1991 N. Alexandria Ave.
The Kuromi Ito family home and business reflects a part of Japanese history and culture that has been in Los Angeles since the 19th century. There family have been in the Los Feliz neighborhood for as long as I can remember and I grew up in Los Feliz. The home is one of the many homes that has helped shape Los Feliz. When you destroy these homes you destroy a page of history that we can never take back.
This beautiful neighborhood that is filled with so much history from so many different cultures should be preserved and protected.
Please consider this and don't destroy this home.

Sincerely-
Shana Fleiss

Sent from my iPhone

SAM AND JANE TAYLOR HOUSE

MID-CENTURY MODERN STYLE

J. R. DAVIDSON, ARCHITECT

BUILT 1947 DECLARED 2020

HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NO. 1216

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION CITY OF LOS ANGELES

100% 105832180 MM 8/3/2021 7X10 SL EMBLEM #4126

DAY OF HEARING SUBMISSIONS