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Author, Historic Wintersburg in Huntington Beach, Huntington Beach, California

City of Los Angeles City Council
Planning and Land Use Management Committee

October 30, 2019
~Sent via email~
clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org

RE: Historic-Cultural Monument nomination of "Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist"

Members of the PLUM Committee,

I urge your support of the "Sakai-Kozawa Residence/Tokio Florist" at 2718 North Hyperion Avenue for designation as a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

The Tokio Florist/Sakai-Kozawa Residence is representative of a multigenerational Japanese American residence and family-owned and operated floral business. The Tokio Florist operated at this site for decades and reflects the contributions of Japanese Angelenos to agriculture, floriculture, and horticulture, and the larger theme of Japanese American contributions to the American West. Additionally, Tokio Florist proprietors Yuki Sakai and her daughter, Sumiko Sakai Kozawa, highlight the contributions of women to the region.

Sumiko Sakai Kozawa, born in Los Angeles in 1916, and her family were incarcerated at Manzanar during World War II. Her grandmother died while at Manzanar and is at rest in the Evergreen Cemetery, along with other family members. Following World War II at the North Hyperion location, Yuki and Sumi were able to rebuild the floral business they originally started in 1929. In her 2011 oral history (Manzanar National Historic Site Collection), Sumi recalls, "we had some beautiful clients" and mentions individuals iconic to early Los Angeles history, including Greta Garbo, Mae West, and Cecil B. DeMille.

The Los Angeles Conservancy states, "Sumi and Frank Kozawa were responsible for the landscaped grounds, which include a Japanese garden featuring rare plantings, koi ponds, wooden bridges, rocks, and circular pathways. The Sakai-Kozawa family members planted fruit trees, poppies, and vegetables in the upper terrace for personal and business use. The Tokio Florist/Sakai-Kozawa Residence is a rare and highly intact example of a residence associated with a Japanese American family and their longtime floral business in Los Angeles."

The U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service 2017 Asian American Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study notes that "***place is rarely provided the significance it deserves in the contemplation or commemoration of historic events/people/ideas in the narratives of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders within the histories of the United States.***"

The City of Los Angeles has a rare opportunity of providing a historic designation recognizing the significance of place and contributions of Japanese Americans so intrinsic to California heritage. Please support this historic designation.

Regards,

Mary Adams Urashima