

Public Comments Not Uploaded RE 21-0438: Support for Oil Can Harry's Historic Cultural Monument

1 message

Lindsay Mulcahy <LMulcahy@laconservancy.org>

Mon, Apr 4, 2022 at 4:47 PM

Reply-To: clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org

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Dear Chair Harris-Dawson and Members of the PLUM Committee:

Please see the attached letter detailing the Los Angeles Conservancy's support for the designation of Oil Can Harry's at [11506 West Ventura Boulevard](#) as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). We encourage you to support the Cultural Heritage Commission's recommendation to adopt the staff report and findings, and forward PLUM's recommendation in support of Oil Can Harry's as an HCM.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Best,
Lindsay

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Pronouns: She / Her / Hers

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LAC support letter Oil Can Harry's 21-0438.pdf

270K



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April 4, 2022

Submitted Electronically

Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Chair
Councilmember Gil A. Cedillo
Councilmember Bob Blumenfield
Councilmember John S. Lee
Councilmember Monica Rodriguez
Los Angeles City Council
Planning and Land Use Management Committee
[\[Email\]](#)

RE: Council Record 21-0438, Oil Can Harry's Historic-Cultural Monument Designation

Dear Chair Harris-Dawson and Members of the PLUM Committee:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Conservancy, I encourage you to support the Cultural Heritage Commission's recommendation to adopt the staff report and findings, and forward PLUM's recommendation in support of Oil Can Harry's at 11506 West Ventura Boulevard as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM).

The nomination, initiated by Councilmember Paul Krekorian and written by Office of Historic Resource staff, contextualizes Oil Can Harry's within the expansive growth of the LGBTQ+ movement in the 1960s and 1970s and highlights its significance as one of the longest continually-operating LGBTQ bars in the San Fernando Valley. The property is nominated under Criterion 1, "*identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, city or community*" for its role as a landmark LGBTQ social gathering place in the San Fernando Valley.

Oil Can Harry's was also identified in the SurveyLA's LGBTQ Context Statement as eligible for listing under the state and local designation as a rare intact example of institutional development linked to the Gay Civil Rights Movement in the San Fernando Valley.

The property's tenure as a nightclub dates back to 1935 under the name Zomba Café burlesque club. In 1968, it was purchased by William E. Byrne and Bert Charot, who operated the venue as Oil Can Harry's until 2020. The emergence of Oil Can Harry's coincided with, and fueled, a growing movement for LGBTQ+ rights in Los Angeles and across the country. The late 1960s and 1970s were a pivotal moment for LGBTQ+ consciousness-raising and institution building efforts. In the face of widespread social exclusion and police brutality, Oil Can Harry's encouraged gathering, expression, and connection among the LGBTQ+ community.



It, and other LGBTQ+ bars of the era served both social and political functions. Oil Can Harry's is documented as protecting its patrons during police raids by sounding a secret alarm signaling to same-sex dance partners to switch and mask as heterosexual couples. During the AIDS epidemic, they hosted countless fundraisers from drag shows to car washes for AIDS awareness and relief.

As described by ONE Archive, "Oil Can Harry's was a place customers could call their own regardless of interest in country-western, rodeo, disco, or leather. Oil Can Harry's provided a secure space for queer patrons to mingle, dance, perform, and fundraise throughout some of the most formative periods of LGBTQ+ history."

While the use of Oil Can Harry's is changing, the physical building and place where Oil Can Harry's happened is important in helping acknowledge and represent LGBTQ+ heritage. Designation of the building as an HCM ensures the physical place by which this history happened is maintained, while still allowing flexibility for new uses now and in the future.

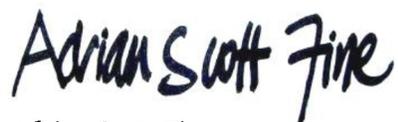
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Historic-Cultural Monument designation for Oil Can Harry's at 11506 West Ventura Boulevard. We strongly encourage you to adopt the Cultural Heritage Commission's recommendation to adopt the staff report and findings and forward PLUM's recommendation in support of Oil Can Harry's as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

About the Los Angeles Conservancy:

The Los Angeles Conservancy is the largest local historic preservation organization in the United States, with nearly 5,000 members throughout the Los Angeles area. Established in 1978, the Conservancy works to preserve and revitalize the significant architectural and cultural heritage of Los Angeles County through advocacy and education.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 430-4203 or afine@laconservancy.org should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Adrian Scott Fine
Senior Director of Advocacy

cc: Councilmember Nithya Raman
Councilmember Paul Krekorian

