

CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD
Cultural Affairs Department
Room 1500, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 485-2433

REQUEST FOR HISTORIC - CULTURAL MONUMENT DECLARATION

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT WITHIN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES: Japanese Union Church of
Los Angeles

LOCATION: 120 North San Pedro Street Los Angeles 90012
(Community) (Zip)

(Cross Streets) First Street and Temple

COUNCILMANIC DISTRICT NO. 9th

OWNER'S NAME & ADDRESS: City of Los Angeles, Department of General Services,
200 North Main Street, Room 800, City Hall East, Los Angeles 90012
(City) (Zip)

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION OF PROPOSED MONUMENT: 1922-23
(This information is important)

ARCHITECT: H. M. Patterson
(Identification of the architect is very important)

DESCRIBE ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES: See Continuation Sheet
(Photograph must be provided)

DESCRIBE HISTORIC-CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE AS IT PERTAINS TO SEC. 22.130 OF THE LOS ANGELES
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE: (If necessary, attach a sheet) See Continuation Sheet

SOURCE/S OF INFORMATION: See Continuation Sheet

NAME & ADDRESS OF PROPONENT: See Continuation Sheet

(City) (Zip)

TELEPHONE NO. (213) 623-2489 DATE: February, 1985

(This portion to be filled in by Cultural Heritage Board Members)

REASONS FOR DECLARATION/DENIAL:

BY: C.H.B. MEMBER DATE OF BOARD ACTION

**PLEASE NOTE THAT CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD ACTION RECOMMENDING DECLARATION IS SUBJECT
TO ADOPTION BY THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL.**

Council File No. _____ City Council Action Dated _____

JAPANESE UNION CHURCH OF LOS ANGELES

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Union Church building is significant as an important religious institution of the Japanese-American community in Los Angeles as it appears to be the first edifice built to house a Protestant congregation in that community. It is a notable example of ecclesiastical neoclassical architecture in the Los Angeles area.

The institution was formed as a result of the efforts of Reverend Magojiro Furuya on February 7, 1918, from the merger of the Los Angeles Japanese Congregational Church (which had its origin in the Japanese Mission of the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles, in existence by 1906), the Los Angeles Japanese/Presbyterian Church (organized in 1905), and the Japanese Bethlehem Congregational Church. Initial leaders of the church were Reverend Giichi Tanaka, minister, and Reverend Kiyozumi Ogawa, assistant minister.

In the summer of 1922, plans for the new building to house the merged church were drawn by architect H. M. Patterson. While the value was stated as \$52,000 in the building permit, the actual costs were over \$100,000. The building was dedicated on March 25, 1923, and James A. Blaisdell, President of Pomona College, Claremont, preached the dedicatory sermon. Two special services, one in English, the other in Japanese were conducted. An evening program featured music performed by the choir of the First Methodist Episcopal Church.

H. M. Patterson was a prolific local architect who specialized in church design. Among his many commissions included the First Christian Church in Riverside, and in Los Angeles, the Eagle Rock Presbyterian Church and the Westlake Presbyterian Church. His last and largest work was the Immanuel Presbyterian Church on Wilshire Boulevard (in conjunction with architect Charles F. Skilling). He was an active member of the prestigious Allied Architects (designers of the Los Angeles County Hall of Justice and the Los Angeles County Hospital) having been elected the first treasurer in 1921.

The church was designed to serve as a community center. The sanctuary had a movie projector booth with the altar area capable of staging plays. The social hall served as a gymnasium which was popular with the youth of the community. The church regularly conducted day and night English language classes. During World War II, when the Japanese-Americans were evacuated from the west coast, Union Church served as a religious and social center for blacks from the South who relocated to Little Tokyo. Following the War, Union Church resumed its vital role in the Japanese-American community serving first as a housing resource for those returning to the Los Angeles region.

In 1953, Union Church became self-supporting, and its name was changed from Japanese Union Church to Union Church of Los Angeles. The Congregational and Presbyterian governing bodies conveyed title to the church building to its congregation in February, 1971. In 1975, ground was broken for a new church two blocks away at Third and San Pedro Streets. Today, although the congregation has moved from the original building, the church remains as a symbol of the history and progress of the Japanese-American community of Los Angeles.

JAPANESE UNION CHURCH OF LOS ANGELES

DESCRIPTION:

The Union Church is a brick building in the Classical Revival style separated from the street by an iron-railed forecourt. It is three stories in height, and rests on a concrete foundation. The symmetrical facade is clad in brown colored brick while the remaining sides of the building are of red brick.

The two-story high portico is dominated by four concrete Ionic columns with cast stone capitals featuring egg and dart molding. The entablature has rosettes on the architrave which repeats the egg and dart detail. Within the portico are three inset arches flanked by pilasters with classical capitals and bases. Each arch consists of an arched window of favrile glass surrounded by stained glass above a patterned brick spandrel with cross motifs. At the base of each arch is a pair of wood paneled doors leading into the church.

The portico pediment continues into a cornice with an egg and dart pattern, wrapping around the sides of the building forming small returns. Above the portico a high parapet rises into a triangle with a squared apex topped by a metal six-foot high cross.

Additional arched stained glass windows as well as one-over-one double-hung wood sash windows appear on the red brick bays on the sides and the rear elevation. Further fenestration of a utilitarian nature on the parapeted east elevation suggests residential and other uses in the rear of the sanctuary. The interior contains a large auditorium on the second floor, and classrooms on the lower floor. The church is separated from the commercial building to the south by a narrow walkway which slopes down to a partial basement.

Los Angeles, CA
(Los Angeles Co.)
Kashu Manichi
(Cir. D. 7,000)

AUG 12 1986

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

Cultural Heritage Comm-
ission
HM #312

Cultural Heritage Commission Votes to 1713 Declare Two Churches as Historical Sites

The Cultural Heritage Commission of the Cultural Affairs Dept. recently voted to declare the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and the Japanese Union Church, both located in Little Tokyo, as Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The Little Tokyo Historic District has been approved for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, located at the corner of First St. and Central Ave. was created by architect Edgar Cline and declared a monument because of the architectural importance of its exterior and sanctuary which bring together design elements of eastern and western architecture.

The temple is also important because of its significance to the history and stability of the Japanese

American community.

Dedicated in 1925, the church played a major role in the Issei/Nisei community as a religious and cultural institution.

Vacant since 1969, a 50-year lease is being negotiated between the Dept. of General Services (the owner of the property) and the Japanese American National Museum for exclusive use of the building to house a permanent collection of historically-significant documents and artifacts pertaining to the Japanese American experience.

The Japanese Union Church, at 120 N. San Pedro St. was declared a Historic-Cultural Monument because of the architectural importance of its exterior and the facet that is a notable example of ecclesiastical neoclassical architecture in the area. It is also important as a religious institution for

the Japanese Americans.

The building was dedicated in 1923 and is the work of architect H.M. Patterson. It was originally designed to serve as a community center.

During World War II, the Union Church served as a religious and social center for Blacks from the South who relocated to the community left vacant by the evacuation of person of Japanese ancestry for the West Coast. After the War, the church resumed its role as a housing resource for those returning to the area.

The East-West Players, one of the oldest Asian American theatre groups in the U.S. presently housed in the East Hollywood area, proposes to use the site for theatre performances.

The Commission's declaration requires City council confirmation and will be brought for recommendation before the Recreation, Library and Cultural Affairs Committee of the Council in the near future.

Addition of these properties to the present list of 308 Historic-Cultural Monuments is part of an ongoing effort by the Cultural Heritage Commission to preserve historically and architecturally significant creations.

The Cultural Heritage Commission is under the auspices of the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Dept. Further information may be obtained by calling (213) 485-2433.

Los Angeles, CA
(Los Angeles Co.)
Los Feliz Hills News
(Cir. W. 21,450)

AUG 13 1986

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

Historic monuments

Cultural sites are real history

The Cultural Heritage Commission of the Cultural Affairs Department recently voted to declare the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and the Japanese Union Church, both located in downtown Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, as historic-cultural monuments. The Little Tokyo Historic District has been approved for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, at 355-369 East First Street/109-119 North Central, was created by architect Edgar Cline and declared a monument because of the architectural importance of its exterior and sanctuary which bring together design elements of eastern and western architecture. The temple is also important because of its significance to the history and stability of the Japanese community in Los Angeles.

Dedicated in 1925, the temple played a major role in the Japanese American community as a religious and cultural institution. During the World War II relocation of Japanese from the west coast, the temple served as temporary quarters for evacuees.

Vacant since 1969, a 50-year lease is being negotiated between the Department of General Services (the owner of the property) and the Japanese American National Museum for exclusive use of the temple to house a permanent collection of historically significant documents and artifacts pertaining to the Japanese American experience.

The Japanese Union Church, located at 120 N. San Pedro St., was declared an historic-cultural monument because of the architectural significance of its exterior and the fact that it is a notable example of ecclesiastical neoclassical architecture in the Los Angeles area. It is also important as a

religious institution of the Japanese American community in Los Angeles.

The building was dedicated in 1923 and is the work of architect H.M. Patterson. The church was originally designed to serve as a community center. During World War II, the Union Church served as a religious and social center for blacks from the South who relocated to the Little Tokyo community left vacant by the Japanese relocation. After the War, the church resumed its role as a housing resource for those returning to the area.

The East-West Players, one of the oldest Asian-American theater groups in the United States presently housed in the East Hollywood area, propose to use the building for Asian-American theater performances.

The commission's declaration of the church and temple requires City Council confirmation.