

Communication from Public

Name: Lydia Ponce

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 09:02 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: The Westminster First Baptist Church of Venice is a place where Black Lives Matter. Where Black History Matters.... we are still in service to Creator as Black Prayers Matter - to all slain in the neighborhood - and we honor their lives - Black Relatives Matter... Take the jewels and gems that is Venice - the Elders that are still here... they have the history in their DNA - and as witness to the resilience and resistance who are now the 7th generation... they are the true historians.

Communication from Public

Name: Caroline

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 10:39 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: As a member of the Venice transplant community I have a huge respect and love for this city and the people in it. Everyone comes from somewhere and by taking away the church you are taking away a person's somewhere. This is the time invest in existing community, not erase more of it. The people of the save venice church community show up every Sunday and have been doing so for years. You dont find love and connection like that often and it would be a disservice not to honor the dedication of the people of the community.

Communication from Public

Name: Shawn Barry

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 10:55 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing in support of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. I have lived in Ocean Park - a block from Venice since 1979. I have been to events at First Baptist Church. It has provided a site for many social justice meetings and social service work. I became where aware of the church being sold under shady circumstances 3 years ago. I had little hope that my local friends could save this vital historic Black Church in this historically first Black neighborhood of our proud Venice history. I attended Sunday events to try and save it - but not enough. I am so proud of these people who have stuck with and supported this VERY important location for over 3 years and that they are finally being heard! It is time for the city to acknowledge this important church to the community and give it back to the people who have worked so hard to save it. This building should not belong to one man or one family - this belongs to the neighborhood and its historical importance. PLEASE - do the right thing!

Communication from Public

Name: Rana
Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 08:47 AM
Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I have been a resident and homeowner in Venice for over 25 years. Through out that time I have been deeply aware of the significance of the black communities presence and history in Venice. The first baptist Church is crucial to preserving and honoring the history of the black community and continuing to value the lives of black children and families past, present and future in Venice and Los Angeles. This is your opportunity to do the right thing! Preserve the legacy of the families that created the first baptist church and be the ones to move this idea into action by giving the first Baptist Church of Venice historical cultural monument designation. Showing that Black Lives really do matter to you. Thank you for your vote Rana Haugen Core

Communication from Public

Name: Shannon Moss

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 08:52 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I'm writing in support of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. The building has played a key role in maintaining, and more recently in focusing, the long history of the Black community in Venice. It's history in helping to establish and create the Venice that we know today is vital to remember - this church represents the Black community that helped BUILD Venice as it is. We cannot overlook and overwrite Venice's Black history, at a critical juncture in time when we're finally looking to give credit to those contributions. Over these many years the First Baptist Church of Venice has also played key roles in the community, as some vibrant and committed churches do, providing a site for spiritual gathering and community building, social justice activism, community health and social service work, community-serving non-profits, housing for people in need, community events, and more. For some reason the city has overlooked the dynamic history of Black Venice and the centrality of this church in that history - and it's high-time to remedy that oversight. It's time to designate the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument.

Communication from Public

Name: Esteban Pulido

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 09:22 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: How will you preserve history in Venice? How will you participate in the process to right a wrong, to undo a catastrophic blindspot, take back one location of ignorance? You can mandate that the city preserve this important legacy. A mere acknowledgement is not enough though — the Venice community and those coming from as far as Silver Lake, Boyle Heights, Chinatown, and even from across the country, to congregate every Sunday at the First Baptist Church in Venice demand that the church be acknowledged for what it is: a crucial site of important and incredibly relevant history in the community. Now is the decisive moment to take the steps to counter the monumental violence and oppression against Black humans by having the willingness to re-tell and uplift their history in Venice. Esteban Pulido Member Westside Local, Los Angeles Tenants Union

Communication from Public

Name: Andy Anderegg
Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 09:24 AM
Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing in support of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. I appreciate what the Council has said this year, that it's committed to mitigating the racial disparities in its planning procedures. I, too, have changed in 2020. Where once I was fine with my own inaction, I now see it as racist action. In the past, I've stayed silent. I haven't emailed. I've believed it when someone said, "that history's already gone." But, the history is not gone and the congregation and community of the church is not gone. More importantly, they're asking us to designate it a historic monument and to protect it. In 2020, I've learned that if I'm not listening to and taking action on the requests of the Black community, I'm actively participating in suppressing and dismantling it. So, when a Black church once attended by Arthur Reese and Irving Tabor that's stood for 111 years in a neighborhood that was once red-lined asks us to designate it a historic monument and to protect it, the only right answer is yes. I haven't lived here all my life, but I'm glad to be here, and I'm glad I've woken up to the idea that Venice existed before I got here, that it has a history we need to protect and proclaim, and that Black people in the United States, California included, have not been treated equally. When good, presumably not racist, people abide by racist policies, we're racist. As such, we must take every action we can. We have a choice in the here and now: we can be racists or we can be anti-racists. There is no in between. If a Black church falls in Venice it is because Venice, its constituents, and its power brokers are racist. Black Lives Matter means Black Land Matters. Thank you for your work on this issue, especially for the work that's yet to be done to make this right. Best, Andy Anderegg
1403 Innes Pl. #1 Venice, CA 90291

Communication from Public

Name: Mairym Llorens
Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 09:40 AM
Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: This statement is in support of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. It is time for the city of Los Angeles to take palpable, concrete action against the erasure of Black history in Venice. The church represents 111 years of Black history, simply by virtue of its continued existence--and that history deserves to be preserved. On top of this, the very nature of what Venice is, it's bohemian beach culture, has at its roots the lives of historic figures like Irvin Tabor and Arthur Reese who regularly attended the church. In other words, the FBCV is the heart of Venice Beach's culture and Black origins. These factors alone provide a strong basis for the positive designation of the building as a cultural symbol. No other interests should matter in this case; certainly not those of a millionaire property owner who isn't from the neighborhood and can just as easily buy another property anywhere in the world. The fact that the desires of one wealthy family have for years taken precedence over the mandate the city has to preserve monuments of its people's cultures is shameful and absurd. City planning's recent commitment to start to mitigate the racial disparities in planning procedures requires for decisions such as the FBCV's historical status to be made on the basis of population-wide considerations. For too long planning decisions have benefitted wealthy, powerful individuals to the detriment of regular folks. The city has failed to address the impact that gentrification has had on the Black, Brown and Indigenous families in Venice, forcing so many to leave the neighborhood they grew up in, the neighborhood they created through their lived experiences. The church is a constant reminder of the neighborhood that once was. Perhaps that is why newcomers intent on changing Venice to their benefit are so keen on replacing it with a personal mansion; perhaps that is why persons filled with hate have tried to burn it down. What we ask is something so simple, but so meaningful. Protect a historical symbol that even in its shuttered state serves as a place of worship that brings together wide swaths of the community, across ages, races, languages and spiritualities. Put your words into action, and finally give the FBCV the designation it deserves.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 09:41 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: Please help the preserve the Venice Baptist Church in Oakwood. It has historic significance and should be given historic status as an important cultural place in the history of Venice

Communication from Public

Name: Beth Ally

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 09:54 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: 2020 has been the year that much that was hidden has come into view. Many questionable activities have been allowed to continue for far too long and the rape and pillage of the Oakwood community is on my front burner. First Baptist Church of Venice is of paramount importance to the original families of Venice, the families whose blood, sweat and tears literally did the building of our beloved Venice but Venice hasn't shown them love or appreciation, let alone the acknowledgement of their participation and contributions. I've lived here 32 years, having grown up in Louisville, a place that too has done little to acknowledge the systematic racism that led to the death of Breonna Taylor earlier this year. I'm not a church person but I believe in the power of churches to lift people up and with them the community. First Baptist Church of Venice has been a beacon for 111 years and the very fact that the church changed hands without significant outreach to the community illustrates that Venice really isn't different than Louisville in its belief that Black Lives, Black Communities and Black History matters less than that of the white history we've been taught, but right now you have a chance to change that narrative. Save the Beacon. Save the First Baptist Church of Venice. Be brave. Be honest. Respect the contributions that those original families and their offspring have given to make this a very special place. I beg you to please make First a Baptist Church of Venice a historic landmark and let's work together to rectify the historic injustices. We can lead the way or we can continue to ignore how the laws were create to deny the Black community's chances of every reaching true equality.

Communication from Public

Name: Mike Bravo

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 02:48 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: The City government and their Land Use Planning Department made a declaration to correct the systemic deficiencies that have adversely impacted Black and Brown communities, and to move in the direction racial justice, equity, and restorative justice. There is arguably no better first step to correcting and advancing historical, economic, and racial equity in one swing than to designate the First Baptist Church of Venice (FBCV) with historical status. In Venice you have this historic Black community that was instrumental in, not just physically, but culturally creating this world famous destination of which the FBCV was center. This historic 120 year old and only intentional Black community on the California coast which has weathered the KKK, Jim Crow, redlining, drug epidemics, unconstitutional gang injunctions, and other varying intensities of social targeting deserves nothing less than having the space and its symbol, the distinctive A-framed edifice landmark that has served as a beacon and guided the community through it all— the First Baptist Church of Venice at E.L. Holmes Square, to be honored and protected as a historical landmark.

Communication from Public

Name: Fiona Apple

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 06:48 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: This Church is a Landmark already. It is a Landmark of devotion,community,love and hope. This gathering place is SO important to SO many people,as I am sure today's attendance will make abundantly clear. Let it also be and remain to be a Landmark of remembrance of the good people who built this town,who made their families here,who lived and worked and loved and died here,and whose descendants still congregate here. Please PLEASE honor and respect them,and the story of our community,by designating and acknowledging this place as the historical and cultural landmark that it IS. The alternative plan,would be an abomination of the values of this community.

Communication from Public

Name: Zelda Hallman

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 06:55 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: The First Baptist Church has been the heart of the Oakwood community since 1910 and is now symbolic of the battle against white washing in Venice. In the early 1900s, real estate developer Abbot Kinney hired African-Americans to construct the canals that make Venice unique in California. In the 1920s, a small black community, mainly employees of Abbot Kinney, was centered in what would become Oakwood, racially separated and surrounded by the middle-class white community. In the 1940s and '50s, during World War II, the Black population in Oakwood tripled. Due to red-lining, Oakwood was one of the few areas in LA and the only area in Venice where Blacks could own homes. It was and has continued to be a very diverse working-class neighborhood. However, the residents of Oakwood are now faced with displacement, marginalization, and the destruction of rent-stabilized housing. If Penske is allowed to turn the church into another interloper mansion, it will be one more example of the transformation of what was a working-class community of color to an elite enclave for millionaires and tech companies. The First Baptist Church should be designated the historic monument that is - the cultural and spiritual center and reminder of the hard working people who helped make Venice one of the most unique places in the world. The First Baptist Church and the Oakwood community deserve their place in history. Please do the right thing.

Communication from Public

Name: William Wood

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 07:59 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I encourage you to vote in favor of the motion by Council Members Bonin, Harris-Dawson, and Krekorian for the Cultural Heritage Commission to (re)consider the First Baptist Church of Venice as a Historic-Cultural Monument. Located in the heart of Venice's Oakwood neighborhood, a historical and historically Black neighborhood founded by the people who (literally) built Venice, the Church building has played a significant role in the history of the Black community in Venice and in Los Angeles, and has provided a space for community events, gatherings, and services. One of the oldest Black institutions in Los Angeles, the Church was founded and attended by, among others, Arthur Reese and Irving Tabor, two people who played critical roles in building Venice some hundred years ago into the unique place it remains today and whose invaluable contributions and historical importance are recognized by place names in Venice. A courtyard of cottages down the block on Westminster Avenue west of the Church building that Irving Tabor built and his family maintained are protected and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The First Baptist Church building should receive the same recognition, and the City should make the Church a Los Angeles Historical-Cultural Monument to uplift the history of Black Venice and Los Angeles and highlight the Church's centrality in that history.

Communication from Public

Name: Lindsey Klucik
Date Submitted: 10/28/2020 10:35 PM
Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing in support of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. Erasing 100+ years of Black History and VENICE history would be a disgrace the Venice as a community and even to the world. Through its history this church this landmark is the HEART of Venice. The fact that we still have community members that have lived in Venice for 70+ years who can tell the stories of their family members building this church - should be something that is celebrated - not demolished and turned into apartment complexes. There are somethings and places that should be spared of the evils of gentrification. And the First Baptist Church should be one of them. It sits like a beacon across from Oakwood Park in the heart of what has been Venice's Black neighborhood and is a classic example of late mid-century architecture. Over these many years the First Baptist Church of Venice has also played key roles in the community, as some vibrant and committed churches do, providing a site for spiritual gathering and community building, social justice activism, community health and social service work, community-serving non-profits, housing for people in need, community events, and more. For some reason the city has overlooked the dynamic history of Black Venice and the centrality of this church in that history - and it's high-time to remedy that oversight. It's time to designate the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. I personally helped pull this story together with the help of members of Oakwood and long time Venice Residents as well as documentary photographer Rachel Bujalski and National Geographic Writer Oliver Whang. If this article speaks volumes!!! If you have not read it I urge you to do so. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2020/10/fight-to-save-one-hundred-years-black-history-gentrifying-los-angeles/#close> Copy and paste the above in a browser - with this story publish on the NatGeo level its gotten a lot of recognition - its a story to be told and one that deserves to be preserved and carried forward amongst the community trying to save it. Ive also copied the text of the story and attached it below

ON A SUMMER day in 2017, Pam Anderson was walking toward 7th and Westminster, an intersection in the Oakwood neighborhood of Venice, California, that she'd gotten to know well over nearly 70 years. She spotted her friend, Laddie Williams, sitting in front of a building on the corner—a building that served for many years as a refuge for family, tradition, and worship. “I said, Laddie, why you out there? What’s going on? And she said, Girl, you know what’s going on here? I just got a call... and they’re selling the church.”

Williams and Anderson were teenagers in 1968, when the First Baptist Church of Venice was constructed, but the congregation, made up primarily of Black and Hispanic members, has been around since the 1920s. Now the church’s fate seemed to mirror that of the community it had long served.

Over the past 50 years Oakwood, a historically Black and Hispanic neighborhood founded by workers who dug the area’s distinctive canals, has gradually become majority white. As Los Angeles grew larger and wealthier in the second half of the 20th century, residents migrated to beachside neighborhoods. By the early 2000s Oakwood was a hot real estate market. Starbucks moved in, then Whole Foods. Older single-family homes were knocked down and replaced with modern apartment buildings, what Anderson calls BUBs—big ugly boxes. Real estate got more expensive, and more exclusive. Many families decided to sell. (Workers in San Diego struggle to navigate the booming cost of urban life.)

A woman standing in front of her church in Venice Beach, California

A church sign in Venice Beach, California

Left: Naomi Nightingale Jr., who has lived in Oakwood since she was 16, stands in front of a banner across the street from First Baptist reading "Black History Matters." Nightingale has been trying since 2017 to have the church designated as a historical monument. She hopes it can be... [Read More](#)

activists gather at a church in Venice, California

Community members and other supporters gather outside the steps of First Baptist to demonstrate their opposition to the building's new owners, who are trying to turn it into a residential complex. Some locals have been meeting here every Sunday since 2017.

“We became a cheap buy for wealthy people who saw a shiny object between Santa Monica and Marina del Rey,” says Naomi Nightingale, another longtime Oakwood resident. “And they could build their mansions on this little piece of land without regard for who was there or what had been built before they came, just because they wanted it.”

At the same time, families of color were also leaving the neighborhood because of gang injunctions the Los Angeles Police Department had placed on Oakwood. This often took the form of no-knock searches, like the one that led to Breonna Taylor’s death in Louisville, Kentucky, and restrictive sanctions on young men of color that prevented many from gathering with friends and family in public. The injunctions started in the 1980s and continued into the 2010s, until a federal court ruled them unconstitutional in 2018.

“Being Black or Latino, whenever the police would come to your door, you were scared,” says Williams, who has lived in Oakwood her whole life. “Families moved out to get their kids away from the gang injunction because you couldn’t be anywhere in Venice and not get stopped or harassed or arrested by the police if they deemed you a gang member.”

Women standing outside of their church in Venice Beach, California

Left to right: Laddie Williams, Pam Anderson, Lydia Ponce. Williams and Anderson were among the first community members to sit outside First Baptist after it was sold.

a person standing in front of their church in Venice, California

People standing outside of Venice High School in California

Left: Shya Foreman, a rising junior at Venice High School, stands on the sidewalk in front of the church. "The BLM memorial here at the church was the first time I've ever been to a protest," she said. "Being able to come to my community and hear what's going on, have... [Read More](#)

A man standing in a classroom

Chaka Foreman, a teacher at Mark Twain Middle School in Venice, stands in his empty classroom. Foreman has been encouraging students and parents to have conversations with their families about the Black Lives Matter movement and the importance of community action. The First Baptist Church often found itself at the forefront of the community's pushback against gentrification, led by Bishop E.L. Holmes, who was, in Williams's words, "iconic." During his 44 years at the church, she says, Holmes mentored the young men who found themselves stuck between gang violence and police intimidation. He supported families during the injunctions and represented the Black and Hispanic congregants' interests on committees and planning boards. (For Black motorists, there's a never-ending fear of being stopped by police.)

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Under Holmes, the church became a center of stability for Oakwood residents as their neighborhood slowly shifted around them. When he died in 1999, the community held a three-day funeral and remembrance in his honor. The following year, Venice named the intersection outside the church E.L. Holmes Square.

The church struggled financially under new leadership and was put up for sale by its congregation in 2015. When it was sold for \$6.3 million two years later to Jay Penske, the chairman and CEO of Penske Media, to be turned into a multi-family private residence, it became a tangible symbol of gentrification.

Seeing the church's doors shut and its windows busted out on that day in 2017, Williams thought of the weddings, baptisms, and funerals she'd gone to over the years. She thought of Holmes and the long history of people of color in Oakwood. "It just sparked something in me," she says. "I felt my duty was to go and save that history that has been so prevalent in the community for over 100 years. So I started sitting."

"Bulldozing the history"

Since Williams's first sit-in in 2017, a small group of community members has been meeting in front of the boarded-up church on Sundays. They call themselves Save Venice, and their goals are two-fold: To stall development of the property through existing codes and regulations, and to

convince the Venice city council to designate the First Baptist Church a historic site, which would protect the structure. Save Venice hopes the church will become a reminder of the legacy of Black and Hispanic people in Oakwood, even as fewer of them live there. (See the most stunning churches in the U.S.)

children play outside of their grandmother's home in Venice Beach, California
Laddie Williams's grandchildren outside her house in Oakwood. The Venice gang injunctions, which were carried out by the LAPD for decades before being ruled unconstitutional in 2018...
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A woman sitting outside of her home in Venice Beach, California
a person standing outside of his house in Venice Beach California

Left: Pam Anderson sits in the front yard of her house in Oakwood, where she's lived for 70 years, only one street over from where her mother was born. "I really would like to have [the church] preserved ... to represent our legacy. We built a community. And the new gentrifiers are... [Read More](#)

Parishioners gathering outside of their church in Venice Beach, California
Activists and community members gather for a weekly meeting in front of First Baptist Church. Not all members of the Oakwood community want the church preserved. The preservation effort is complicated by the fact that when the First Baptist Church building was sold in 2017, the congregation moved to another location nearby—it didn't dissolve. This was largely deemed the right move by church members. "That was our home, I was at that church more than I was here at my house," says Antoinette Reynolds, a member of the congregation and long-time Oakwood resident whose nonprofit partnered with the church in the years before it was sold. "I did car washes there, I fed the homeless there, people came looking for me crying there. I had more to lose than any of those [protesters]. And I don't feel like some white person came and took it from me. I don't."

Reynolds understands why community members have opposed the development of the building, but to her, the effort is misplaced. "They feel like everything has been taken away from them in this community," she says. "But people can't take anything away from you. You have to decide to sell it. I think we should focus on preserving what we have now; the buildings, those are just places where we've gathered and we met. But we're bigger than that."

"You raze the buildings that are here and you build what you want it to look like," says Nightingale, on the other hand. "But in that process, you're bulldozing the history, the culture, the contributions of the African-American community, so that it can't be seen and cannot be acknowledged, and there's no evidence of it."

In June, in the wake of the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the Black Lives Matter movement brought fresh attention to Save Venice's cause. Young, white residents from the other side of Los Angeles started showing up on Sundays and posting on social media. National and regional newspapers started running articles about the movement. People who had never heard of the church started paying attention. The number of protesters at the Sunday sit-ins swelled to a couple hundred. The fight for the building became a symbol of resilience.

activitists gather at a church to figure out how to save it
Women hug in front of their church in Venice Beach, California
Left: Activists gather at the steps of the church. A city councilman recently suggested he may revisit his approval of the Penskes' renovation plans.

Right: Nightingale and her friend, Ingrid Mueller, embrace after a meeting with... [Read More](#)
Ty Martinez, a recent graduate from Venice High School, worked with Save Venice to organize a memorial for victims of police brutality at First Baptist in June. The church was a rallying point for Martinez, who wanted the protest to be a first step toward reconstructing what he saw as oppressive systems, like the city police. "The church doesn't hold as much weight as other issues," Martinez says. "I understand that it is a fight against gentrification, but that's not at the front of my mind. It doesn't feel as urgent."

Even so, Save Venice leaders were happy to have the support and attention. In light of the protests, city councilman Mike Bonin suggested he may revisit his approval of the church's redevelopment. Some protesters hope that the building could become a community center. (National Geographic reached out to the Penskes, who had no comment.)

The people who have been fighting to save First Baptist remain hopeful and committed to their cause; dedication is paying off. "All of us felt like we needed to save the community," Williams said. "We gotta save this hundred-year-old history. We gotta save what our great-grandparents and our grandparents believed in, because that's all they had."

Rachel Bujalski is a San Francisco-based photographer. Her work largely examines the lifestyles and personalities of people living on the fringes of society.

Communication from Public

Name: Rick Garvey

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 12:04 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I am a longtime Venice resident and I am writing in support of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. The building has played a key role in maintaining, and more recently in focusing, the long history of the Black community in Venice. It sits like a beacon across from Oakwood Park in the heart of what has been Venice's Black neighborhood and is a classic example of late mid-century architecture. Over these many years the First Baptist Church of Venice has also played key roles in the community, as some vibrant and committed churches do, providing a site for spiritual gathering and community building, social justice activism, community health and social service work, community-serving non-profits, housing for people in need, community events, and more. I work as a public health researcher and spent over a year working with homeless youth in the back of this beautiful building. I vividly remember looking at all the pictures on the second floor that documented the history of the Church and indeed of Venice itself. The idea that this historic building would be turned into a mansion has deeply offended me ever since it was announced. It is past time that the City Planning department mitigate the racial disparities resulting from their deficient planning policies and procedures over the years with all the small lot subdivisions and the use of the so called 'Venice Sign Off.' Over the past 25 years I have watched the destruction of so much of Oakwood due to gentrification, and now the loss of this Church would feel like a death blow to my community. It's time to designate the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument.

Communication from Public

Name: Brian Averill

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 12:28 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: This is an excellent opportunity to correct an obvious wrong. This church has been a cultural center of Venice's Black community for decades. Its history is rich and incredible, and I very strongly encourage every councilmember to read this month's National Geographic story about it. Denying its LA historical status would be an egregious mistake. Please do the right thing. Brian Averill
Venice Neighborhood Council

Communication from Public

Name: Nick
Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 12:35 PM
Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing in support of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. The building has played a key role in maintaining, and more recently in focusing, the long history of the Black community in Venice. It sits like a beacon across from Oakwood Park in the heart of what has been Venice's Black neighborhood and is a classic example of late mid-century architecture. Over these many years the First Baptist Church of Venice has also played key roles in the community, as some vibrant and committed churches do, providing a site for spiritual gathering and community building, social justice activism, community health and social service work, community-serving non-profits, housing for people in need, community events, and more. For some reason the city has overlooked the dynamic history of Black Venice and the centrality of this church in that history - and it's high-time to remedy that oversight. It's time to designate the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. I have lived in Venice my whole life and grown up in this community. Part of what's made Venice feel most like home to me, more so than anywhere else in LA, is that it's the only beach-side town where I don't feel out of place as a person of color. The black community here is, and has always been present. Unfortunately that is changing for the worse as gentrification is slowly killing the spirit of our neighborhoods. I'm proud to now be part of a Venice-based soccer club that provides a positive environment for kids just like me, growing up here. That was something I never had in my hometown. Allowing the ignorant, insensitive and selfish re-purposing of a true landmark for the black (and entire) community of Venice/Oakwood is shameful. Honor this history properly, so that it may become the foundation for a better future in my community. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Noah Klein
Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 11:29 AM
Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: Hi! As a third generation Venetian I am writing in enormous support of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. The building at 685 Westminster Ave has played a key role in maintaining, and more recently in focusing, the long history of the Black community in Venice. It arises like a beacon across from Oakwood Park, in the heart of what has been Venice's historic Black neighborhood, and is a classic example of late mid-century architecture. Over these many years the First Baptist Church of Venice has also played key roles in the community, as some vibrant and committed churches do, providing a site for spiritual gathering and community building, social justice activism, community health and social service work, community-serving non-profits, housing for people in need, community events, and more. Given the designation of EL Holmes Square I can't imagine how the city has overlooked Venice's dynamic Black History and the centrality of this church in that history. It's time to designate the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument, not just out of respect and civic duty but for the preservation of a tangible site to teach our youth the history of one of America's most unique and culturally rich communities. As our neighborhood has undergone drastic changes we must hold onto and elevate one of the last monuments of our 111 years of Black History, and if we're being honest the last coastal African-American neighborhood along the entire West Coast. EL Holmes square and the FBCV are without question the remaining legacies of Arthur Reese and Irving Tabor, who were vital in developing the culture of Venice Beach that we know and love today. To lose this building would erase tangible history, our last physical ties to these legacies, and show that in a time of critical consciousness our Venice community sided with short term development over historic community investment. What kind of teachable moment is this for our students at Venice High and Animo who are a part of this dialogue, our teachers, our local business owners, our multi-generational families, all of which have been the dependable voting constituents while suffering great loss. It is with deep hope that I wish to see this building celebrated with the care it has long deserved, and I thank you for your time.

Communication from Public

Name: Kate Eggert, GEHPC

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 11:34 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: Hello Councilmembers. We are the preparers of the King Edward Hotel HCM nomination (Item# 5). We want to thank you for placing the King Edward Hotel on the Consent Calendar. As you know, the Cultural Heritage Commission recommended the King Edward Hotel be included on the city's list of Historic-Cultural Monuments. The commission found that Under Criteria 1, the King Edward Hotel exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community for its association with the early 20th century development of hotels in Downtown Los Angeles, AND as the home of the King Eddy Saloon, a business important to the commercial identity and the prohibition history of Downtown Los Angeles. The commission also found that Under Criteria 3, the King Edward Hotel embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction as an excellent example of commercial building in the Beaux Arts style, AND represents a notable work of master architect John Parkinson. John Parkinson is an architect this city knows very well. He personally purchased the land at Fifth and Los Angeles Streets in 1902 and personally designed and developed the property in 1905. His family owned the King Edward Hotel until 1962. Thank you for your time and consideration. Best, Kate Eggert GEHPC

Communication from Public

Name: Eileen Bryant Archibald

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 11:35 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I was on line pressed *9 to speak and was not ever called. I understand the limit for public comment is 60 minutes. I already submitted comment for item #11. However I additional public comments to make unrelated to # 11. It is apparent that many off grid residents in Los Angeles, and specifically Venice, are not able to access the Venice Neighborhood Council Meeting. This appears to be violation of Brown Rules. Specifically this issue has been raised during Venice LUPC meetings with no action plan with solutions to outreach all local residents, many Elder Venetians are off grid. Re the Venice LUPC meeting: Appeared to set precedence for tsunami assessment for large scale developments. Precedence set for Reese Davidson Community Center. New issue for City Council to consider that large scale developments have Tsunami assessment. With the Venice Hotel at Abbott Kinney and Broadway presentation at VNC LUPC meeting Tsunami assessment was not addressed. In April 2020 earthquake in Catalina specifically added Tsunami risk to Venice. It appears that unfair roadblock has been added for the much needed Reese Davidson Community Center. The Venice Hotel needs to also be required to have the Tsunami assessment

Communication from Public

Name: Eileen Bryant Archibald

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 11:36 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I was on line pressed *9 to speak and was not ever called. I understand the limit for public comment is 60 minutes. I already submitted comment for item #11. However I additional public comments to make unrelated to # 11. It is apparent that many off grid residents in Los Angeles, and specifically Venice, are not able to access the Venice Neighborhood Council Meeting. This appears to be violation of Brown Rules. Specifically this issue has been raised during Venice LUPC meetings with no action plan with solutions to outreach all local residents, many Elder Venetians are off grid. Re the Venice LUPC meeting: Appeared to set precedence for tsunami assessment for large scale developments. Precedence set for Reese Davidson Community Center. New issue for City Council to consider that large scale developments have Tsunami assessment. With the Venice Hotel at Abbott Kinney and Broadway presentation at VNC LUPC meeting Tsunami assessment was not addressed. In April 2020 earthquake in Catalina specifically added Tsunami risk to Venice. It appears that unfair roadblock has been added for the much needed Reese Davidson Community Center. The Venice Hotel needs to also be required to have the Tsunami assessment

Communication from Public

Name: Lori Gay

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 11:37 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: The Los Angeles City Council needs to exercise its leadership to support Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities that have traditionally been underserved for decades. The First Baptist Church of Venice is a key example of a cultural and historical monument that should be preserved. Given that Venice was built on the backs of Black families, it is time to make sure to work to preserve this property and others throughout the City that have cultural and historic significance are lifted up for all of our society. In a time when the plight of Black families for over 400 years is being highlighted in our country, we can seize the moment to make sure that the legacy of Black families is not lost as the neighborhood has gentrified over time. As the region's largest affordable homeownership provider, we continue to find that both homes and commercial buildings have been ripped from the ownership of families of color...we watch it every day. The First Baptist Church of Venice is in the unique position to help us recognize many other community facilities that should be recognized citywide. Neighborhood Housing Services of LA County strongly supports this motion and is available to help lend funding, resources and our development commitment to facilitate the adaptive reuse of this structure to an active community asset. We are grateful to work alongside the Save Venice team, Venice Community Housing and many long term residents to make this dream a reality. Many thanks, Lori Gay, President & CEO, NHS of LA County

Communication from Public

Name: Becky Dennison

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 10:10 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: On behalf of Venice Community Housing, I am writing in strong support for the designation of First Baptist Church of Venice as a City Historic-Cultural Monument. While the current church building is not the original, this site, its purpose, and the vibrancy of the African American community that led to the new building directly across the street all still align with and contribute to the justification for a Historic Cultural Monument at this location. Venice Community Housing (VCH) is supportive of this designation for many reasons, as it aligns with our mission to preserve and protect the diversity of Venice - past and present. Venice Community Housing has worked for over 30 years to ensure community control of land and provide affordable housing to long-time and new residents of Venice, as one means of protecting the historic diversity of Venice and ensuring that history can continue to be built. Historic community assets that promote and protect economic and racial diversity and inclusion – individual and collective – continue to be stripped from Venice, and your vote to support the historic designation of First Baptist Church of Venice can start to reverse that trend. The history of the African American community on the Westside of Los Angeles, in Venice, and in the Oakwood community of Venice are inextricably linked to the First Baptist Church of Venice. Oakwood was among only a few neighborhoods in Los Angeles, and the only one in Venice before Venice was annexed by the City of LA, where African Americans could own property and build strong community. African American leaders involved in the founding and development of Venice established and built this community, and places of worship were a centerpiece of that community, especially the First Baptist Church of Venice. For generations afterward, this church was not only a religious institution and an African American asset and enclave, but also served broader community needs and provided much needed resources and services to people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. We urge PLUM members to acknowledge the undeniable significance of the First Baptist Church of Venice and the rich cultural legacy of the early African American enclave in Venice, and that our history matters. We also urge you to consider the implications of the loss of a historic community institution and asset of more than 100 years, in comparison to the need for one

new, unusually large single family home. Additionally, we urge you to work more proactively and diligently to protect and defend African American communities' history, present, and future in Venice and all neighborhoods across the City. We hope City officials will stand with residents who share a direct and indirect history with this Church, and grant the historic designation. And after that, we urge you to more deeply engage with the smaller, but still very strong, low-income communities and communities of color living in Venice to support equity, inclusion, and an equal voice in the future of our neighborhood. Becky Dennison
Executive Director Venice Community Housing

Communication from Public

Name: Brenna Desmond

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 10:10 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I'm writing this in support of protecting the underrepresented, and blatantly displaced and disrespected, culture of Black History in Venice Beach. First Baptist Church, since the original building was built 111 years ago, has been a heart centered hub for the Black and Brown community to gather in harmony and community. Considering at the time of its establishment, the Black residents of Venice were forced to live in a 5 block radius and could legally not cross Lincoln Blvd, and that the gentrification still occurring today in Venice continues to displace a neighbors whose families have been here for up to 7 generations, the Oakwood community deserves the honor and acknowledgment from the city, of protecting this church as a Historical Monument. In most history books about Venice, the Black community is not even mentioned, when in reality, Black culture played a huge role in forming of the Venice culture as we know it. I have lived in Venice for 9 years and only recently have been educated about the overtly racist history that occurred here in Venice Beach, and the covertly racist systems which still affect the Black and Brown community today. There is little public / published info on this very serious issue, and it is important to change this, and to make this history accessible to all. Although the First Baptist Church property was fraudulently sold to the Penske family in 2017, the community hopes to win the battle against the gentrifying forces of systemic racism, and rightfully restore this church building a non-denominational community center to honor Black history in LA, and provide artistic and educational services for the local Oakwood community and beyond. Protecting this building as a Historical Monument could aid the Oakwood community in this process, and regardless of who winds up owning the property, this token of true history, built by as black architect and co-funded by the Black community, deserves to stay intact so the people of Venice, and all those who visit, will be aware of the true, erased history of Black Venice culture and hopefully, get to attend the community center and experience true Venice love and inclusion. Thank you for doing what's right, Brenna Desmond

Communication from Public

Name: Sonia

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 10:20 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to support the designation of the First Baptist Church of Venice as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. Before I knew of its rich history and the importance it played in the Black community in Venice, I often took photos of the church as it is an impressive architectural structure and thought how unfortunate it was that it was deteriorating. Then I learned of the history of the church, about Oakwood and how the Blacks were restricted to this area, and how they built a beautiful church and community within the lines. Along with the Oakwood park across the street, the church has served not only as a place of spiritual worship but also to help those in need, a gathering place for the community--the heart of the community. For a place of such importance and beauty to be turned into a private residence is a mistake that cannot be fixed. Once history is destroyed, it's gone forever. I live blocks away from the church and it pains me to no end that the Black community is shrinking in an area they were once forced to live in. The preservation of the First Baptist Church of Venice is vital and important not just for the Black community but Venice as a whole and its rich history. The Oakwood story and its church are equally as important as any other element of Venice that makes this city so special.

Communication from Public

Name: Reed Blaylock

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 02:58 PM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I strongly support designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. The building has played a key role in maintaining, and more recently in focusing, the long history of the Black community in Venice. It sits like a beacon across from Oakwood Park in the heart of what has been Venice's Black neighborhood and is a classic example of late mid-century architecture. Over these many years the First Baptist Church of Venice has also played key roles in the community, as some vibrant and committed churches do, providing a site for spiritual gathering and community building, social justice activism, community health and social service work, community-serving non-profits, housing for people in need, community events, and more. For some reason the city has overlooked the dynamic history of Black Venice and the centrality of this church in that history - and it's high-time to remedy that oversight. It's time to designate the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument!

Communication from Public

Name: Erin Soares

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 03:06 PM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing in support of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. The building has played a key role in maintaining, and more recently in focusing, the long history of the Black community in Venice. It sits like a beacon across from Oakwood Park in the heart of what has been Venice's Black neighborhood and is a classic example of late mid-century architecture. Over these many years the First Baptist Church of Venice has also played key roles in the community, as some vibrant and committed churches do, providing a site for spiritual gathering and community building, social justice activism, community health and social service work, community-serving non-profits, housing for people in need, community events, and more. For some reason the city has overlooked the dynamic history of Black Venice and the centrality of this church in that history - and it's high-time to remedy that oversight. It's time to designate the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument.

Communication from Public

Name: Susan Barnes

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 03:10 PM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing in support of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. It represents 111 years of Black History in Venice. There are so few monuments for Black Americans. This is an opportunity to demonstrate that they & their contributions to American history truly matter.

Communication from Public

Name: Samantha Harmon

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 06:24 PM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: Please protect black history, community & culture in Venice by preserving the First Baptist Church of Venice, a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument.

Communication from Public

Name: Steve Bevilacqua

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 07:33 PM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: Dear City Council Special Planning and Land Use Management Committee: I am a longtime (25+) years resident of Venice, and I support the preservation of the First Baptist Church of Venice. I am in favor of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. The building has played a key role in maintaining, and more recently in focusing, the long history of the Black community in Venice. It sits like a beacon across from Oakwood Park in the heart of what has been Venice's Black neighborhood and is a classic example of late mid-century architecture. Over these many years the First Baptist Church of Venice has also played key roles in the community, as some vibrant and committed churches do, providing a site for spiritual gathering and community building, social justice activism, community health and social service work, community-serving non-profits, housing for people in need, community events, and more. For some reason the city has overlooked the dynamic history of Black Venice and the centrality of this church in that history - and it's high-time to remedy that oversight. It's time to designate the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. Please preserve this important piece of Venice and Los Angeles history. Thank you very much for your time. Best regards, Steve Bevilacqua Venice

Communication from Public

Name: JAMES A ROBB

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 11:56 AM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: Council File: 20-1173 I am writing in support of designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. The building has played a key role in maintaining, and more recently in focusing, the long history of the Black community in Venice. It sits like a beacon across from Oakwood Park in the heart of what has been Venice's Black neighborhood and is a classic example of late mid-century architecture. Over these many years the First Baptist Church of Venice has also played key roles in the community, as some vibrant and committed churches do, providing a site for spiritual gathering and community building, social justice activism, community health and social service work, community-serving non-profits, housing for people in need, community events, and more. For some reason the city has overlooked the dynamic history of Black Venice and the centrality of this church in that history - and it's high-time to remedy that oversight. It's time to designate the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. • 111 years of Black History in Venice the community square holds and that the current edifice is symbol of. • the Church being founded and attended by historic Los Angeles personages of Arthur Reese and Irving Tabor who were instrumental in creating the world famous destination and bohemian culture of Venice Beach • City Planning's recent commitments to mitigate the racial disparities resulting from their deficient planning policies and procedures • This need to be a place for residents of Oakwood that were Incarcerated during the gang injunction rehabilitation and community outreach This is the agenda its on: Item #11
https://ens.lacity.org/clk/committeegend/clkcommitteeagend26144697_10292020.html

Communication from Public

Name: Jed Pauker

Date Submitted: 10/29/2020 11:14 PM

Council File No: 20-1173

Comments for Public Posting: I write today to join the community in support of designating First Baptist Church of Venice as a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. While timing is everything, it's not too late to make this happen, even with the property's current status. Acting on increasing interest in this affirmative initiative demands only political will. Today is a very good time for Los Angeles to show leadership. Anchoring Oakwood's unique status in Los Angeles history while serving as Black Venice's spiritual center, the First Baptist Church of Venice merits permanent designation as a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument.