

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Eileen Bryant Archibald

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 07:14 PM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** RE: Council File #20-1173 Agenda Item #11 Venice First Baptist Church 671-685 & 686-688 Westminster Ave. Venice CA 90291  
I support the designation of Venice First Baptist Church as a Historical Monument. There was lack of support for Historical Designation at Appeal hearing 1,14.20, This was despite fact that the Cultural Heritage Commission and office of Historic resources recommendation made 9.28.18. Please see attached letter from Alison Rose Jefferson, MHC, Ph.D., Historian. Thank you

5482 wilshire boulevard  
number 199  
los angeles, california 90036  
U S A

323.931.6745 tel  
323.933.2447 fax

alisonrosejefferson@gmail.com

alisonrosejefferson

28 September 2018

Cultural Heritage Commission and Office of Historic Resources

City of Los Angeles

[chc@lacity.org](mailto:chc@lacity.org)

Lambert Geissinger [lambert.giessinger@lacity.org](mailto:lambert.giessinger@lacity.org)

Melissa Jones [melissa.jones@lacity.org](mailto:melissa.jones@lacity.org)

Ken Bernstein [ken.bernstein@lacity.org](mailto:ken.bernstein@lacity.org)

Save Venice [savevenice.me@gmail.com](mailto:savevenice.me@gmail.com)

To Whom It May Concern:

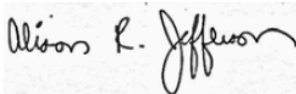
RE: First Baptist Church of Venice, CHC-2018-5305-HCM and ENV-2018-5306-CE, 685 Westminster Avenue, Venice, CA 90291

I support the designation of First Baptist Church of Venice as a Historical Cultural Monument for the City of Los Angeles. This church represents one of the few remaining built environment and community symbols of an African American enclave's significance and longevity in the Venice civic landscape in West Los Angeles.

This site is culturally significant for its role in the African American community development and contributions in the western part of Los Angeles city and county, particularly in the areas of Venice and Santa Monica. African Americans who attended First Baptist Church of Venice were socio-economic and cultural builders of Venice, which was founded in the first decade of the twentieth century by land developer Abbott Kinney.

Designating the church as a cultural monument will recognized African Americans' contributions and history to the Venice community and the City of Los Angeles, which have not been adequately acknowledged or documented in the public sphere and written historical writings.

Sincerely,



Alison Rose Jefferson. M.H.C., Ph.D.

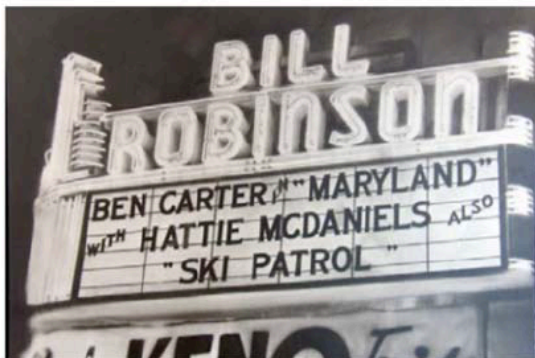
Historian

[www.alisonrosejefferson.com](http://www.alisonrosejefferson.com)

---

## LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

### Context: African American History of Los Angeles



*Prepared for:*

City of Los Angeles  
Department of City Planning  
Office of Historic Resources



FEBRUARY 2018

This context was prepared by GPA Consulting with **Alison Rose Jefferson.**

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Rachel Bujalski

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 11:27 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:**

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 06:07 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:** Ina Haugen

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 05:34 PM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** I'm writing to support the Historic Designation of the First Baptist Church of Venice, This church has long been a focal point of the African-American Community in Venice with the current building having been constructed with funds and labor from the community. Your designation of the First Baptist Church of Venice as a Historic Cultural Monument will help ensure that the Black history of Venice does not disappear. It would be a tragedy to have that happen. This history should not be minimized or discounted. Please show your respect for the Black community by approving this designation for the First Baptist Church of Venice. Thank you, Ina Haugen, Psy.D. 803 Venezia, Venice, Ca

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Eric R Ahlberg

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 07:07 PM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** I support designating the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. It has played an important and long role in our community. First Baptist Church of Venice has supported the community, as some vibrant and committed churches do, providing spiritual gatherings, social justice activism, community health and social service work, housing for people in need, and more. Many of the black youth of Oakwood were targeted and killed in LAPD anti-gang sweeps and drug wars from the 70s on. The city has ignored the dynamic history of Black Venice and the importance of this church. Predatory Investors have always been circling Oakwood looking for prey, and destroying community one lot at a time. Let us together restore First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument, and restore a vibrant flower for our community.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Ann Winchester

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 10:41 AM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** The First Baptist Church Church of Venice should become a Los Angeles Cultural Monument. It is important to save the historic places of the Black community in Los Angeles. Our beach communities are quickly losing their past and becoming available only to the rich. We will regret this loss and when it is gone it can't be brought back. This is your moment to be brave council people.



## Communication from Public

**Name:** Sarah Mahir

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 04:08 PM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** Hello I'm beyond in favor of designation of historical cultural monument status to the FBCV. The church has been a pillar in the Oakwood African American community since it was founded over 111 years ago. The Church at 685 Westminster has been a part of my life since I was born. It sits as one of the biggest properties in Oakwood deeded by the families of Five African Families to Build. African American History in Venice has been grossly overlooked by The City, survey LA and many of the various other reporting entities that come here..... But what do they come for ? THIS VERY COMMUNITY THAT THIS CHURCH IS A BEACON TO! FBCV is a community space... spiritual center....community health ....social justice and activism work center.....housing& homeless services .....food services.....safe parking ..... woman's center.....So DO YOU UNDERSTAND HOW CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT SOMETHING OF THAT MAGNITUDE WAS BUILT BY AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE REDLINED COMMUNITY OF OAKWOOD. THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF VENICE provided SERVICES FOR GENERATIONS THAT MANY PEOPLE HAVE GRAPPLED TO SEARCH FOR IN THE COMMUNITY TODAY IN ITS ABSENCE . Irving Tabor, who was instrumental in creating the Venice Beach culture we love today with Abbott Kinney Founded and attended this Church as well as Arthur Reese. Irving Tabors direct descendant Jataun Valentine and in her 80's is still involved in the activism to keep her family's church alive. BLACK HISTORY IS ALIVE AND WELL! IT LIVES IN VENICE. IT LOVES AND HELPS ITS COMMUNITY. BLACK LAND MATTERS. BLACK HISTORY MATTERS. Please designate FBCV a Historic Cultural Monument as it was intended by its founders. You can't look at it, walk inside it, BE IN THAT SANCTUARY and NOT FEEL THAT THATS EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS BUILT TO BE. Thank you Sarah Mahir

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Steven Williams

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 03:10 PM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** I am requesting that the council reconsiders nominating the Venice First Baptist Church as a Historical Monument. In Venice history, it is central to the story of black community contributions to the development of our neighborhood. As black and brown families have been squeezed out of the community by gang injunctions and gentrification, it is an increasingly critical monument to cultural diversity and economic inclusivity in a community quickly homogenizing into a white affluent coastal enclave. The church has much potential as a community resource center. Please save the heart of Venice...Save the VFBC by nominating it as a historic monument and return it to use as a community resource. Thank you.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Jon Wolff

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 11:41 AM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** For over a century, the First Baptist Church of Venice was recognized as a venerable institution in the Venice community. Since the 1960s, the church building on the corner of Westminster Avenue and 7th Avenue in Venice has served as the living embodiment of that institution. For about three years now, the group Save Venice has fought for the recognition of this church as an historic icon. Now the Los Angeles City Council has the opportunity to establish that recognition.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Mark Rago

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 12:33 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. I think many years from now, the church will be an amazing symbol and landmark signifying a big part of the grand history of Venice CA. How anyone can look at the old photos, read the history of the building and know the history of the area and want to transform it into a residence or otherwise is simply wrong, disheartening and sad. It's more than just a church - it's history, and it is culture, and it obviously has immense value in the community.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Beth Greenwald  
**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 04:59 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. I had thought this was done years ago and am shocked that it hasn't happened. The church/building is an important part of the long and important history of the Black community in Venice. It is located across the street from my home across from Oakwood Park in the heart of the Venice's Black neighborhood and is an amazing example of late mid-century architecture. For all my years in Venice and many years before, the First Baptist Church of Venice plays a key role in the community to this day, as some beautiful and committed churches do, providing a site for spiritual gathering and community building, social justice activism (united us all during George Floyd Protest, where myself and my nieces and nephews learned about Juneteenth, community health and social service work, non-profits, community events, and more. I have never understood why the city has overlooked the amazing history of Black Venice and not done more to memorialize it as well as the importance of First Baptist church in that history - and there is no time like no to remedy this. It's time to do the right thing - the thing I believed had already been done and designate the First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. There are over 110 years of Black History in Venice the community square is the keeper of these stories and this important history. So much of the City Planning's leaves out our diverse history and highlights the racial disparities resulting from their deficient planning policies and procedures. Let's get this right. Thank you for your time. Beth Greenwald

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Sarah Wall

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 03:49 PM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** I agree with this: 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:** Suellen Mayfield

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 05:46 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 the long history of the Black community in Venice. 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.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Celia Williams

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 02:24 PM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** First Baptist Church of Venice the oldest African American church in the city of Venice California. This church was established forty-six years after slavery ended. Black people did not have a place of worship and could not worship in the surrounding white churches. Mr. Irving Tabor donated 687 Westminster Ave Venice Ca 90291 to the Black pioneers and the history began in 1912 when Reverend E.L. Holmes took over leadership the congregation grew exponentially. When the five lots across the street became available ten dedicated Black families put up their deeds to purchase the land. The First Baptist Church of Venice to this day shines as a beacon of hope in the Oakwood Community and deserves historical status in this once predominately Black and Brown community. Black history in the Oakwood area needs to be remembered by the City of Los Angeles "Bishop E.L. Holmes Square" is the first of many historical sites in the Oakwood Community that deserve recognition in the City of Los Angeles. Thank you Celia Williams



## Communication from Public

**Name:** Karen Brodtkin

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 05:55 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. I have lived in Venice since 1986. I chose to buy a house there because it was a multiracial community. To me this is a big but all too rare residential plus. I enjoyed our community's class and racial diversity and have been devastated at its whitening and gentrification. Selling off the First Baptist Church so that it can be turned into a private mansion is an awful thing. The church has been an anchor in maintaining, and more recently in focusing on 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. Sincerely Karen Brodtkin 803 Amoroso Place Venice 90291

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Jacqueline Beiro

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 03:52 PM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** I am writing in enthusiastic 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 is a symbol of the historic Oakwood Park neighborhood, a key cultural area that seems forgotten in the rush to build McMansions in our treasured neighborhood. Over the years I have witnessed how crucial of a community center the First Baptist Church of Venice is to Venice's Black and brown residents, providing a site for spiritual gathering and community building, social justice activism, community health and social service work, community-serving non-profits, a cornerstone of the beginnings of Venice's eclectic personality, and a place to provide housing for those in need. Time and again the city has overlooked the dynamic history of Black Venice and the centrality of this church in that century-old 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 urge this commitment to represent its recent commitments to mitigate the racial disparities in the planning of our city by granting this designation to this important landmark. Respectfully yours, Jacqueline Beiro

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Devra Anne Weber

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 12:54 PM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** October 28, 2020 To: Special Planning and Land Use Committee, City Council of Los Angeles From: Devra Weber, Professor Emerita, History, UC Riverside Re Historical Recognition of the First Baptist Church of Venice Dear Commission Members, The First Baptist Church of Venice embodies the long history of African Americans in Venice and the nation. The congregation formed itself in 1910, built the church on African American donated land. They had fled Jim Crow and racism in the South yet faced restrictive housing covenants in Los Angeles, and a powerful Ku Klux Klan. Despite these obstacles the congregation expanded. The First Baptist Church represents the sweat and dedication of African Americans and is a symbol of their resilience for over a hundred years. Its demolition would forever stand as an insult to the history, hard work, and tenacity of African Americans and this congregation. I personally came to California in 1948 to join my paternal family who had arrived in the 1880s, and thus speak both as Los Angeles citizen and an historian. Material culture is critical to teaching history and most Americans learn history from their visits to places more (unfortunately) than in schools. To enter a building where this history took place, to walk the grounds where others once walked, is to enter a visceral and somatic relationship with the past. Children more eagerly read about a place that they have experienced. Only four California African American churches have been designated with historic markers. Only one is Baptist (in Northern California). Formal recognition of the First Baptist Church of Venice would ensure that it would remain a material reminder of the resilience and courage of its founders, and of their resistance to Jim Crow and the racism of the time. I urge the Commission to formally make the First Baptist Church of Venice a Historical Cultural Monument. Its time. It's the right thing to do. And it will be a major contribution to the City of Los Angeles as a whole. The Church is a material reminder of how far LA has come. Sincerely yours, Devra Anne Weber Professor Emerita, History, UC Riverside devraw@ucr.edu

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Cynthia Jackson

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 02:42 PM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** I am writing of support of designating First Baptist Church of Venice a Los Angeles a Historical Monument. This church has been in this community at least all of my seventy years in Venice, This church has served the spiritual and social needs of many families in this community. Many generations have grown up in this Church. We need not forget the Black History of this corner of 7th Avenue and Westminster Ave. I ask please preserve this Historical Landmark.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Maud Winchester

**Date Submitted:** 10/28/2020 03:02 PM

**Council File No:** 20-1173

**Comments for Public Posting:** After the death of George Floyd, it was to the First Baptist Church of Venice that I pushed my 89 year old mother in her wheelchair to mourn. My grown children arrived by bike. Standing on the sidewalk, spilling into the street, members of the community wept as we listened to speakers give voice to the anguish we all felt. We stood in the shadow of the First Baptist Church of Venice with a collective plea to treasure and fight for the survival of African Americans across our nation. There was an irony that the church, a symbol of Venice's long history of home to blacks on the westside was to soon to disappear. So, please dear council members, let's be irony-free today, let's move to have the First Baptist Church of Venice designated a Los Angeles Cultural Historical Monument. We will all be the better for it. Best, Maud Winchester Board Member Gregory Ain Mar Vista Tract Historic Preservation Overlay Zone