

Communication from Public

Name: Michael Okamura

Date Submitted: 10/18/2021 06:23 PM

Council File No: 21-0916

Comments for Public Posting: Council File no. 21-0916 Dear Planning and Land Use Management Committee members: On behalf of the Little Tokyo Historical Society I am writing in support of a City of Los Angeles Cultural-Historic Monument (HCM) designation for the Nishiyama Residence/Otomisan Japanese Restaurant, located at 2405-2508 East First Street. A 1924 building permit identified Mr. Ryohei Nishiyama as the owner of the 1.5-story Queen Anne-style residence at 2508 East First Street, originally built for Mrs. Anna E. Littleboy at the height of Boyle Heights' early development period. From the mid-1920s through the present day, there has been a Japanese American commercial presence at this property. Otemo Sushi Café (now called Otomisan Japanese Restaurant) opened in the easternmost storefront of the commercial building. The building that houses Otomisan is the last Japanese restaurant in Boyle Heights and tells the story of Japanese American entrepreneurship in Los Angeles before and after World War II. The buildings and signage represent multiple layers of historical and cultural significance, including early residential and commercial development of Japanese Americans in Boyle Heights. The properties help to tell a story of Japanese American resilience and opportunity—how the Nishiyama Family and other Japanese families in Boyle Heights thrived in the pre-and post-WWII years despite significant challenges, injustices and discrimination. Both the commercial and residential buildings were important touchstones in Japanese American life in multicultural Boyle Heights. Also, according to Los Angeles Conservancy's research, Otomisan is the oldest, continuously operated Japanese restaurant in L.A.! Such a nomination also calls attention to our city's beloved legacy businesses. We hope that you also share our appreciation of the Nishiyama Residence/Otomisan Japanese Restaurant in conveying the larger history of our city and region, and that you will support the proposed HCM designation for the properties. Sincerely, Michael G. Okamura President



October 18, 2021

Planning and Land Use Management Committee
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street, Room 340
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Case No.: CHC-2020-6022-HCM Nishiyama Residence/Otomisan Japanese Restaurant

Dear Planning and Land Use Management Committee members:

On behalf of the Little Tokyo Historical Society I am writing in support of a City of Los Angeles Cultural-Historic Monument (HCM) designation for the Nishiyama Residence/Otomisan Japanese Restaurant, located at 2405-2508 East First Street.

A 1924 building permit identified Mr. Ryohei Nishiyama as the owner of the 1.5-story Queen Anne-style residence at 2508 East First Street, originally built for Mrs. Anna E. Littleboy at the height of Boyle Heights' early development period. From the mid-1920s through the present day, there has been a Japanese American commercial presence at this property. Otemo Sushi Café (now called Otomisan Japanese Restaurant) opened in the easternmost storefront of the commercial building. The building that houses Otomisan is the last Japanese restaurant in Boyle Heights and tells the story of Japanese American entrepreneurship in Los Angeles before and after World War II. The buildings and signage represent multiple layers of historical and cultural significance, including early residential and commercial development of Japanese Americans in Boyle Heights.

The properties help to tell a story of Japanese American resilience and opportunity— how the Nishiyama Family and other Japanese families in Boyle Heights thrived in the pre-and post-WWII years despite significant challenges, injustices and discrimination. Both the commercial and residential buildings were important touchstones in Japanese American life in multicultural Boyle Heights. Also, according to Los Angeles Conservancy's research, Otomisan is the oldest, continuously operated Japanese restaurant in L.A.! Such a nomination also calls attention to our city's beloved legacy businesses.

We hope that you also share our appreciation of the Nishiyama Residence/Otomisan Japanese Restaurant in conveying the larger history of our city and region, and that you will support the proposed HCM designation for the properties.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael G. Okamura', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael G. Okamura
President

Communication from Public

Name: Kristen Hayashi

Date Submitted: 10/18/2021 05:01 PM

Council File No: 21-0916

Comments for Public Posting: On behalf of the Japanese American National Museum (JANM), I am writing in support of a City of Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument (HCM) designation for the Nishiyama Residence/Otomisan Japanese Restaurant. JANM's dedication to preserving and sharing the Japanese American experience is analogous to the efforts to designate the Nishiyama Residence/Otomisan Japanese Restaurant as a historic cultural monument. The Japanese-operated businesses that operated at 2504-2508 East First Street, from 1925 to the present, broadly symbolize the vitality of the historically diverse and largely immigrant neighborhood of Boyle Heights, while also representing the Japanese American presence in the neighborhood. It is remarkable that on this one block in Boyle Heights, the Nishiyama Residence/Otomisan Japanese restaurant building and the Japanese Hospital remain extant and represent the brave acts of Japanese immigrants to challenge de jure and de facto discrimination that barred landownership. Together, these two sites stand as social justice monuments at a time when Japanese Angelinos' opportunities were severely restricted. Additionally, they demonstrate how Japanese immigrants looked inward within their community for support to develop businesses, service organizations, and social institutions to navigate deeply entrenched discrimination. An HCM designation for the Nishiyama Residence/Otomisan Japanese Restaurant would increase the number of historic buildings and sites that help to tell the Japanese American experience in Los Angeles and underscore the economic and multicultural contributions that Japanese immigrants and subsequent generations have made in the city. I hope that you will support the proposed HCM nomination.