



**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

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August 22, 2018

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street, Room B-50  
Los Angeles, California 90012

**RE: National Register of Historic Places Nomination for  
Filipino Christian Church (AA in LA MPS)**

Dear Board of Supervisors:

Pursuant to Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 60.6(c) I am notifying you that the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) at its next meeting intends to consider and take action on the nomination of the above-named property to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Details on that meeting are on the enclosed notice. The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic buildings and other cultural resources worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register provides recognition and assists in preserving California's cultural heritage. If the item is removed from the scheduled agenda, you will be notified by mail.

Local government comments regarding the National Register eligibility of this property are welcomed. Letters should be sent to California State Parks, Attn: Office of Historic Preservation, Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer, 1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, California 95816. So that the SHRC will have adequate time to consider them, it is requested, but not required, that written comments be received by the Office of Historic Preservation fifteen (15) days before the SHRC meeting. Interested parties are encouraged to attend the SHRC meeting and present oral testimony.

As of January 1, 1993, all National Register properties are automatically included in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) and afforded consideration in accordance with state and local environmental review procedures.

The federal requirements covering the National Register program are to be found in the National Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and in Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 60. State law regarding the California Register is in the Public Resources Code, Section 5024. Should you have questions regarding this nomination, or would like a copy of the nomination, please contact the Registration Unit at (916) 445-7009. **Note that staff revises nominations throughout the nomination process.**

Sincerely,

Julianne Polanco  
State Historic Preservation Officer



**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
STATE HISTORICAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

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**COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Marshall McKay, Chair

Alberto Bertoli, AIA

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Janet Hansen

Luis Hoyos

Rick Moss

David Phoenix

Adrian Praetzellis, PhD

Adam Srro

## MEETING NOTICE

**FOR:** State Historical Resources Commission Quarterly Meeting

**DATE:** Friday, October 26, 2018

**TIME:** 9:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Los Angeles City Hall  
Room 1010, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

This room is accessible to people with disabilities. Questions regarding the meeting should be directed to the Registration Unit (916) 445-7008.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

DRAFT

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Filipino Christian Church  
 Other names/site number: Filipino Disciples Christian Church  
 Name of related multiple property listing:  
Asian Americans in Los Angeles 1850-1980 MPS  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 301 N. Union Avenue  
 City or town: Los Angeles State: California County: Los Angeles  
 Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_ statewide      \_\_\_ local  
 Applicable National Register Criteria:  
 \_\_\_ A      \_\_\_ B      \_\_\_ C      \_\_\_ D

_____ <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	_____ <b>Date</b>
_____ <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____ <b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	_____ <b>Date</b>
_____ <b>Title :</b>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:

Bungalow/Craftsman

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:

Late Gothic Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: \_\_\_\_\_

Foundation: CONCRETE and BRICK

Walls: BRICK, STUCCO, WOOD/shingle

Roof: ASPHALT/shingle

Other: WOOD

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Filipino Christian Church occupies a corner lot, and is set back from Union Avenue behind a concrete parking lot. The church is a one-story-plus-basement 3,667-square foot building constructed in 1909, designed by the architectural firm Jeffery, Van Trees & Millar in the Craftsman style with Late Gothic Revival influences. It is of wood frame construction with a rectangular plan, and an asymmetrical side-gable roof with overhanging eaves. The exterior walls are clad with brick, cement plaster, and wood shingle siding. Fenestration consists of wood sash arched windows, many with stained leaded glass. Additional features include a front-gable entrance porch on the east façade, and a square bell tower topped with metal spires at the southwest corner. Behind the church is a noncontributing building, a one-story residence constructed in 1999, which serves as a parsonage. The Filipino Christian Church retains all aspects of integrity.

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## Narrative Description

The Filipino Christian Church is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of North Union Avenue and West Court Street in the Temple-Beverly neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles, known as Historic Filipinotown. The property is bordered to the north by a one- and two-story multi-family residential property, and to the west by an alley. The surrounding area contains a mix of low- to medium-density, single- and multi-family residential and institutional uses. The property is occupied by two buildings. The church, constructed in 1909, sits in the middle of the property. It is set back from Union Avenue by a small surface parking lot paved in concrete. The parking lot is wrapped on the east and south by narrow, landscaped planting beds with an arroyo stone retaining wall and metal security fence. The church's original bell is displayed on a small concrete pad at the southwest corner of the parking lot. The parking lot is accessed by a concrete driveway from Union Avenue and a concrete staircase from Court Street. The parsonage, constructed in 1999, is located west of the church, at the rear of the property. It is flanked on the west and south by narrow landscaped yards, a plastered masonry retaining wall, and metal security fence. The area between the two buildings is a concrete patio.

The church is designed in the Craftsman style with late Gothic Revival influences. It is one story in height over a raised basement. It is of wood frame construction over concrete and brick basement walls and foundations remaining from the original 1893 church building. The church has a rectangular plan and an asymmetrical side-gable roof with wide eaves, exposed rafter tails, birdsmouth bargeboards, overhanging rakes, and asphalt composition shingle roofing. The exterior walls are clad in wood shingle siding, cement plaster, and brick veneer. Decorative buttresses of brick and plaster articulate the primary (east) façade.

The primary entrance is asymmetrically located at the south end of the east façade and consists of a pair of partially glazed, paneled wood doors topped by a pointed-arch transom light with leaded, stained glass and Gothic Revival tracery. The doors are sheltered under a projecting concrete porch with a front-gable roof supported on wood outriggers, clustered wood posts, and battered brick piers. The gable end is paneled in a pattern of blind pointed arches above a cambered dentil cornice, and supports a wood finial. The porch is accessed from the parking lot by a flight of concrete steps. A similar gable shelters a basement entrance on the west façade; a second basement entrance is sheltered under a shed roof supported with a wood beam and knee braces. The remaining portion of the bell tower is located at the southwest corner of the church building. It has a square plan and is three stories in height. A segmental arch opens to a portico at the basement level; the first story is enclosed; and the upper level is open between four corner piers topped by Gothic-style metal finials.

Fenestration consists of arched and rectangular wood-sash windows, many with leaded glass, stained glass, and/or wood tracery. Window configurations include a large, pointed-arch window with stained, leaded glass and wood tracery; fixed and pivot pointed-arch windows with stained, leaded glass; paired rounded-arch pivot windows; segmental-arch double-casement windows with leaded glass and wood tracery; and paired, fixed and double-hung rectangular windows. A

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ceremonial cornerstone at the southwest corner of the church reads “Union Ave. M.E. Church A.D. 1893” on its eastern face, and “Rebuilt 1909” on its south face.

The sanctuary is located on the first story. It has wood flooring, smooth plaster walls with wood trim, a ceiling of exposed wood trusses and rafters, and curved wood pews with scrolled armrests. Lighting is provided by decorative metal pendants and sconces. Paneled wood doors on the west wall open to an overflow annex. There is a blind pointed arch on the north wall, behind the altar. An immersion baptismal font lined with pink and blue ceramic tile is in the northwest corner of the sanctuary, adjacent to the altar. The basement contains the social hall, a large rectangular room with tile flooring, plaster walls and ceiling, wood posts and beams, and paneled wood doors with simple wood casings.

The parsonage is a one-story, prefabricated building on a concrete block foundation. It has a rectangular plan and a side gable roof. The exterior walls are clad in plywood siding. Fenestration consists of aluminum sash, horizontal sliding windows.

### *Character Defining Features*

Character defining features of the Filipino Christian Church include elements of both the exterior and interior of the church building, as well as elements of its site.

Exterior character defining features of the church include its overall form: rectangular plan, simple massing, asymmetrical composition, one-story-over-basement configuration, front and rear projecting porches with gable roofs, bell tower with square plan, and asymmetrical side-gable roof with wide eaves and overhanging rakes. Character defining exterior materials and finishes are the brick, cement plaster and wood shingle wall cladding. The church’s fenestration is character defining, including original wood-sash windows (many with rounded, pointed, or segmental arches) and stained glass windows (some with wood tracery and/or lead caning), paneled wood doors (some with leaded lights), and a pair of partially glazed, paneled wood entrance doors topped by a pointed-arch transom light with leaded, stained glass and Gothic Revival tracery. Character defining architectural details include decorative wood elements such as blind arches, dentils, exposed rafter tails, birdsmouth bargeboards, wood outriggers, clustered wood posts, and wood finial; Gothic-style metal finials on the bell tower; decorative buttresses; battered brick piers; and the concrete cornerstone.

Interior character defining features include the sanctuary’s open beam ceiling and exposed wood trusswork, plaster walls with wood trim, hardwood flooring, immersion baptismal font, paneled wood doors, and wood stair balustrades. Character defining furnishings and fixtures are the curved wood pews with scrolled armrests and metal hardware, and decorative metal sconces and pendants.

Character defining site features include the building’s deep front setback from Union Avenue and minimal setback along Court Street, and the arroyo stone perimeter retaining walls.



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### *Alterations*

All known modifications to the 1909 church have been made since the building was acquired by the Filipino Christian Church in 1950. Within the first decade of acquiring the church building, the new congregation made several modifications, the most substantial of which was the installation of an immersion baptismal font (1955). Other changes included the addition of a wood stage in the social hall, and wall-mounted handrails in the stairways (both late 1950s).

The most substantial alterations occurred in 1971 and 1972, following structural damage to unreinforced masonry caused by the Sylmar earthquake. Specifically, the upper portion of the south wall was reconstructed and/or reinforced and then refinished in cement plaster. In the lower, brick portion of the wall, two flanking window openings were infilled with brick. Similarly, the bell tower at the building's southwest corner—originally three stories in height with the pastor's office on the second level and a belfry above—was severely damaged. The belfry was removed<sup>1</sup> and the upper portion of the bell tower rebuilt in its open configuration, with the original spires reinstalled atop the truncated tower. The entire bell tower was reinforced and refinished in cement plaster. Additional alterations undertaken at that time include the sandblasting of the exterior brick veneer, replacement of some original windows with aluminum sliding or louvred windows in original openings (secondary façades), and the plastering of the basement-level walls (all 1972).

In 1985, a partition was added on the basement level to enclose a side room, creating a space for the newly formed Pilipino American Reading Room and Library (PARRAL), later used for Sunday School. A number of improvements were made in the 1990s, including the addition of metal perimeter fencing and gates (1993), replacement of the front lawn with a concrete surface parking lot and driveway (1994), addition of an office at the south end of the stage in the social hall (1995), addition of a box sign over the entrance porch which reads "Filipino Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" (1996),<sup>2</sup> addition of a concrete accessibility ramp (1997), addition of a concrete patio between the side façade of the church and the parsonage (1997), addition of a large metal cross in the sanctuary (1998),<sup>3</sup> addition of metal pipe railings to the front and rear entrances (late 1990s), and replacement of some interior doors in secondary spaces (late 1990s).

Later modifications include the boarding up of the main entrance door lights (early 2000s), addition of ceiling-mounted light fixtures in secondary spaces on the first level and throughout the basement level (2009), replacement of the basement-level flooring with tile (2013), remodeling of the men's and women's restrooms and the addition of a chair lift (2013), addition of carpeting to the altar and stairways (2016), and the addition of a landscaped area adjacent to Court Street entrance gate (2010-2016).

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<sup>1</sup> The original bell is on display in the parking lot.

<sup>2</sup> The box sign was added following Roy Morales' trip to Sacramento officially changing the church's name to "Filipino Disciples Christian Church."

<sup>3</sup> The metal cross on the altar was created and donated by a metal sculptor, a longtime member of the church.

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### ***Integrity***

The Filipino Christian Church retains all aspects of integrity and continues to convey its historic significance.

*Location:* The church remains in the location where it was originally constructed. Therefore, the building retains integrity of location.

*Design:* The church retains the majority of the exterior physical features dating from its period of significance, including elements of its original 1909 Craftsman/Late Gothic Revival architectural style and alterations made during the period of significance by the Filipino Christian Church. On the interior, it retains all of the historic primary spaces, and many of its secondary spaces, with their historic configuration spatial relationships and finishes. Therefore, the building retains integrity of design.

*Setting:* The physical environment of the church has evolved over time, but in general the area retains the basic characteristics that it had when the building was acquired by the Filipino Christian Church. The church is situated within a highly urbanized area of the city. The surrounding neighborhood is developed with low- to medium-density residential and institutional properties dating from various periods, a number of which continue to house businesses and organizations that serve the local Filipino American community. Therefore, the building retains integrity of setting.

*Materials:* The church retains the majority of the exterior and interior materials dating from its period of significance, including elements of its original 1909 Craftsman/Late Gothic Revival architectural style such as brick, wood, and stained glass, and materials added during the period of significance by the Filipino Christian Church such as cement plaster, concrete, and metal pipe railing. Therefore, the building retains integrity of materials.

*Workmanship:* The church retains many features which are evidence of craftsmanship from its original 1909 construction, including brick masonry, wood joinery and decorative features, stained glass windows, Gothic Revival-style metal spires, the sanctuary's exposed truss roof, carved wood pews, and decorative metal light fixtures. It also retains evidence of craftsmanship from its period of significance, such as the ceramic tile baptismal font added in the 1950s. Therefore, the building retains integrity of workmanship.

*Feeling:* The property continues to express the aesthetic and historic sense of the period during which it has been occupied by the Filipino Christian Church and served as a focal point of the Filipino American community in Los Angeles in the postwar era. Therefore, the building retains integrity of feeling.

*Association:* The property continues to convey its direct link to the congregation of the Filipino Christian Church. Therefore, the building retains integrity of association.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HISTORY: Filipino

SOCIAL HISTORY

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1950-1980

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1950

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Jeffery, Van Trees & Millar (architect)

J.C.F. Corbett (contractor)

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Filipino Christian Church is eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Filipino and Social History, and meets the registration requirements for properties associated with Religion and Spirituality established in the *Asian Americans in Los Angeles, 1850-1980* MPS under the context “Filipino Americans in Los Angeles, 1903-1980.” The period of significance begins in 1950, when the building was acquired by the congregation, continuing through the early development of the Temple-Beverly corridor as a Filipino American enclave later identified as Historic Filipinotown, and ends in 1980, by which time the city’s Filipino American population began to disperse throughout the Greater Los Angeles region. As a property that derives its significance from its importance to the Filipino American community in Los Angeles as evaluated under Criterion A, the building satisfies Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties. For its exceptional importance as the most significant social and cultural center of the Filipino American community in Los Angeles, the property satisfies Criteria Consideration G: Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Constructed in 1909 for the Union Avenue M.E. Church, the building was acquired by the Filipino Christian Church in 1950 and has been in continuous use by the Filipino community since that time. Throughout its history, the Filipino Christian Church has served as an important social and cultural center of the Filipino American community in Los Angeles. The Filipino Christian Church is the oldest Filipino American church in Los Angeles, and may be the oldest Filipino-serving church in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

The history of the Filipino Christian Church and its predecessor organization, the Filipino Christian Fellowship, dates back to the first wave of Filipino immigration to Los Angeles, and its story largely parallels that of Filipino Americans in the greater Los Angeles region more broadly. Founded in 1928, the Filipino Christian Fellowship was formed by a group of young Filipino men enrolled at California Christian College under the direction of Rev. Silvestre Morales, a Disciples of Christ preacher from the Philippines who served as its first minister. The Filipino Christian Fellowship was the first organization in Los Angeles established to serve the spiritual needs of the city’s earliest Filipino immigrants, who found themselves socially isolated by discriminatory practices that restricted where they could live, work, and worship. Initially holding prayer meetings in the garden of a Hollywood home, the Filipino Christian Fellowship was soon offered a small space in an area of downtown Los Angeles known as Little Manila. Within a year, the Filipino Christian Fellowship established the Filipino Center, a complex of residential buildings on Bunker Hill where members could live, study, and socialize. For many immigrants, the Filipino Center was the first destination upon arriving in Los Angeles.

<sup>4</sup> Carina Monica Montoya, *Los Angeles’s Historic Filipinotown* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 20; *Asian Americans in Los Angeles*, 7, 169.

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In 1933, the Fellowship was re-organized as a formal church. Over two decades, the Filipino Christian Church was forced to move from place to place, from Little Manila to Bunker Hill to Temple-Figueroa, often due to City redevelopment projects that demolished various neighborhoods in and around downtown Los Angeles. Finally, in 1950, the Filipino Christian Church acquired the former Union Avenue M.E. Church in the Temple-Beverly corridor as their permanent home. The Filipino Christian Church's move to the Temple-Beverly corridor ultimately led to other Filipino organizations and institutions relocating to the area, which became known as Historic Filipinotown. By the 1950s, the Filipino Christian Church was the largest body of Protestant Filipinos in the Southland, if not the nation, and was acknowledged as the center of Filipino American community activities in Southern California.<sup>5</sup>

Since its inception, the Filipino Christian Church has played a vital role in the civic and cultural advancement of the Filipino American community, drawing its membership from various Christian denominations throughout the Greater Los Angeles region. In its early years, the Filipino Christian Church served as a central meeting place for Filipinos seeking to socialize with their fellow countrymen. Some of the most active Church members also founded or served as officers in other Filipino-serving community groups, from social service organizations to groups dedicated to promoting cultural and ethnic pride.

The acquisition of the church building on Union Avenue allowed the Filipino Christian Church to take on an even larger role in the community. With its basement-level social hall and various ancillary spaces, the Filipino Christian Church became a community center, donating space to various local groups and hosting countless events. The Filipino Christian Church was the birthplace of some of the most important organizations serving the Filipino American community. These included the Filipino American Reading Room and Library (PARRAL, later the Filipino American Library)—believed to be the first Filipino library in the United States and the largest Filipino library outside of the Philippines,<sup>6</sup> and the Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA)—the largest charitable non-profit serving Filipino Americans in the United States.<sup>7</sup>

In 1998, the Filipino Christian Church was locally designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 651 for its influential role in the development of the Filipino American community in Los Angeles. The Filipino Christian Church remains one of the oldest and most significant institutions in Historic Filipinotown.

The origins of the Filipino Christian Church go back to the turn of the twentieth century when Protestant Christianity was introduced in the Philippines. In 1898, the United States defeated the Spanish in the Spanish-American War and acquired the Philippine Islands as a territory—ending 300 years of Spanish colonization, during which time Catholicism was recognized as the state

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<sup>5</sup> *Filipino American Experience: The Making of a Historic Cultural Monument*, Lorna Ignacio Dumapias, Ed. (Torrance, CA: Filipino American Experience, 2009), 77.

<sup>6</sup> *Filipino American Experience*, 113-114.

<sup>7</sup> Search to Involve Pilipino Americans, accessed April 2018, <https://www.sipa-online.org>.

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religion. Seeking to assert its influence over the new territory, the United States began sending Protestant missionaries to the island, and the mission boards agreed to divide up the islands by denomination. The Disciples of Christ denomination, Pacific Southwest Region (PSWR), was assigned to the Ilocos region, consisting of the northwestern section of Luzon.<sup>8</sup> The Disciples of Christ missionaries began arriving in the Philippines in 1902, and quickly started Christian schools and pastors' institutes.<sup>9</sup>

By the 1920s, large numbers of Filipinos were coming to the western United States, the vast majority of whom were young unmarried men.<sup>10</sup> Some came as *pensionados*, or scholars sent and supported by the Philippine government. Most of the new arrivals were uneducated laborers from poor families in the provinces, who found work in the agricultural fields of Hawaii or California's Central Valley, or in the fish canneries of the Pacific Northwest.<sup>11</sup> Those who settled in Los Angeles primarily worked as domestic servants, or were hired by the hotel and food industries as cooks, dishwashers, bellhops, and janitors.<sup>12</sup> Despite being able find to work, Filipinos were largely isolated from mainstream society, and were often victims of widespread racism and exploitation. Laws barred them from owning property or marrying outside their race, and many establishments bore signs that read, "No dogs. No Filipinos." Among the few institutions that accepted Filipinos were gambling lairs and taxi dance halls. Even churches often denied admittance to Filipinos.<sup>13</sup>

In 1928, Rev. Silvestre Morales, a dynamic preacher and evangelical leader from the Philippines, came to Los Angeles to speak at the World Sunday School Convention.<sup>14</sup> Rev. Morales had been teaching with the Disciples of Christ mission in the Ilocos region of the Philippines, and was troubled by the plight of the young Filipino men he encountered in Los Angeles. Their exclusion from places of worship was particularly distressing to him, as some of these men had converted to Christianity back home as a result of his ministry.<sup>15</sup> While at the convention, Rev. Morales shared his concerns with Dr. and Mrs. Royal J. Dye. The Dyes were retired Disciples of Christ missionaries who had served in Africa, evangelizing and opening schools in remote villages.<sup>16</sup> Dr. Dye had come to Los Angeles in 1911 and joined the Disciples of Christ Christian State

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<sup>8</sup> *Shades of L.A. Interview Project: Royal Morales*, oral history transcript, interviewer Amy Kitchener (August 31, 1998 and September 9, 1993), 17. For the purpose of evangelizing, the various Protestant denominations divided up the Philippines geographically: the Disciples of Christ went to northern Luzon, the Methodists to central Luzon, and the Presbyterians to southern Luzon; Episcopalians went to the cities and the mountains.

<sup>9</sup> *Filipino American Experience*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Because the Philippines was under American rule, Filipinos were U.S. nationals and therefore could travel to the United States freely. This changed with the passage of the Tyding-McDuffie Act of 1934, which reclassified Filipinos as aliens for the purposes of immigration, and restricted immigration of Filipinos to the U.S. to an annual quota of fifty persons.

<sup>11</sup> *Filipino American Experience*, 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*; *SurveyLA Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Filipino Americans in Los Angeles, 1903-1980*, prepared for the City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, March 2018, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Edwin Balderama, "History of the Filipino Christian Church," in *Filipino American Experience*, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Balderama in *Filipino American Experience*, 17.

<sup>15</sup> *Filipino American Experience*, 18.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 13; Balderama in *Filipino American Experience*, 18.

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Board, actively promoting discipleship in many communities, especially among the youth.<sup>17</sup> The Dyes were sympathetic to the struggles of the Filipinos and offered the garden of their Hollywood home for Bible study and prayer meetings.<sup>18</sup> This was the beginning of the Filipino Christian Fellowship, the first organization in the United States established to address the spiritual needs of early Filipino immigrants, and the forerunner of the Filipino Christian Church.<sup>19</sup>

### Filipino Christian Fellowship

The Filipino Christian Fellowship was established in 1928 by students of California Christian College (later Chapman University), an affiliate of the Disciples of Christ. California Christian College had been formed in 1918 when the Disciples of Christ incorporated its various California colleges into one, moving to a new campus on Vermont Avenue in Los Angeles in 1921.<sup>20</sup> The Dyes were trustees of the college, and as a result of their involvement, a group of thirteen young Filipino men were admitted to the college under the direction of Rev. Morales, who went on to obtain his graduate degree in Theology.<sup>21</sup> While it was noted at the time that the majority of these students would eventually return to the Philippines to serve as Bible teachers,<sup>22</sup> in fact many remained in Los Angeles and formed the nucleus of the Filipino Christian Fellowship, with Rev. Morales serving as its first minister.”<sup>23</sup>

The Fellowship actively recruited Filipinos to attend gatherings at the Dyes' home. When these gatherings grew too large for the garden, "Mother Dye" arranged for the group to utilize the basement of the First Christian Church of Los Angeles, where the Dyes were influential members, for Bible classes and morning worship.<sup>24</sup> The Fellowship grew rapidly and soon the Disciples of Christ Christian State Board adopted the work with the Filipinos as its mission, calling upon Rev. and Mrs. Frank Stipp to supervise these efforts.<sup>25</sup> The Stipps had served as Disciples of Christ missionaries in the Ilocos region for over a decade, establishing various schools and working closely with students.<sup>26</sup> Rev. Stipp and his wife moved to Los Angeles in 1928 to oversee the work of the Filipino Christian Fellowship. The Fellowship flourished under their guidance, due in part to their familiarity with the Filipino culture. Seeking to broaden the reach of their evangelization, the Stipps and the Disciples of Christ Christian State Board secured a small space on Weller Street between First and San Pedro, in the Little Tokyo section of

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<sup>17</sup> *Filipino American Experience*, 13.

<sup>18</sup> The Dye residence was located at 720 N. Kenmore Avenue. The house is extant, though substantially altered.

<sup>19</sup> Balderama in *Filipino American Experience*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> During this period, California Christian College was located at the current site of Los Angeles City College. In 1934, it was renamed Chapman College; it moved to its current campus in the City of Orange in 1954.

<sup>21</sup> Balderama in *Filipino American Experience*, 18; Annabelle Icamen Morales, "Royal Frank Morales" in *Filipino American Experience*, 22.

<sup>22</sup> *Filipino American Experience*, 12.

<sup>23</sup> Balderama in *Filipino American Experience*, 18.

<sup>24</sup> *SurveyLA: Filipino Americans in Los Angeles*, 26. The First Christian Church of Los Angeles was located at 11<sup>th</sup> and Hope Streets in downtown Los Angeles.

<sup>25</sup> Balderama in *Filipino American Experience*, 18.

<sup>26</sup> *Filipino American Experience*, 15.



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downtown Los Angeles, just blocks away from what was then a thriving community of Filipinos known as Little Manila.<sup>27</sup>

By the summer of 1929, the Filipino Christian Fellowship was able to move to larger quarters, acquiring an apartment house and four bungalows at First Street and Bunker Hill.<sup>28</sup> Here the Fellowship established the Filipino Center, intended as a Christian home for Filipinos where members “could live, study, socialize and worship free of prejudice.”<sup>29</sup> The Center housed fifty young Filipino men, including Rev. Morales.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, the Fellowship left the First Christian Church and began renting the large basement hall of the nearby Majestic Hotel for worship services.<sup>31</sup> The establishment of the Filipino Center in the Bunker Hill area is considered to have been “the beginning of an organized Filipino community in the Greater Los Angeles area.”<sup>32</sup>

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, many of the American missionaries left the Philippines, and Rev. Morales was asked to return to his homeland to continue his work there. In 1934, Rev. Morales left Los Angeles with his wife and young son, Royal Frank Morales.<sup>33</sup> With Rev. Morales leaving his post as minister of the Filipino Christian Fellowship, his duties were assumed by the recently ordained Rev. Felix Pascua, also a graduate of California Christian College. Rev. Pascua assumed his new role with the Fellowship at its location in the Chapman Building at 546 S. Los Angeles Street in downtown.<sup>34</sup> That same year, he oversaw the Filipino Christian Fellowship’s transition to a formal church.

### Filipino Christian Church

In 1933, the Filipino Christian Fellowship was reorganized as the Filipino Christian Church. At this time, elders and deacons were elected, a Board of Directors was established, and a Sunday School was formed.<sup>35</sup> This reorganization took place under the auspices of the Disciples of Christ denomination, with the members of the Filipino Christian Fellowship serving as the new church’s charter members.<sup>36</sup> While the vast majority of Filipinos were Catholic, the Catholic churches at the time did not cater to the Filipino community. Rather, Catholic Filipinos often

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> The Filipino Center was located at 718 W. First Street; demolished.

<sup>29</sup> Dumapias, Lorna, electronic communication, March 31, 2018.

<sup>30</sup> *SurveyLA: Filipino Americans in Los Angeles*, 26.

<sup>31</sup> *Filipino American Experience*, 15; Balderama in *Filipino American Experience*, 18. The Majestic Hotel was located at 700 W. First Street; demolished. In the late 1920s, there was a Filipino enclave located on Bunker Hill, where the Walt Disney Concert Hall and Los Angeles Music Center were built. The Filipino Center and Majestic Hotel were demolished, along with the rest of Bunker Hill, by a massive redevelopment project carried out by the City of Los Angeles in the 1950s and 1960s.

<sup>32</sup> “Oldest Fil-Am Church in L.A. Celebrates Journey,” *U.S. Asian Post*, August 4-10, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Rev. Morales remained in the Philippines until his death in 1955. His son, Royal Frank Morales, was named for Dr. Royal J. Dye and Rev. Frank Stipp. “Uncle Roy” returned to Los Angeles in the 1950s and played a critical role in the advancement of the city’s Filipino American community.

<sup>34</sup> *SurveyLA: Filipino Americans in Los Angeles*, 26; Morales in *Filipino American Experience*, 22.

<sup>35</sup> Rev. Felix A. Pascua, “Filipino Christian Church ‘Trek’: As the years went by...,” June 1993.

<sup>36</sup> *Filipino American Experience*, 16; Balderama in *Filipino American Experience*, 18.

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attended mass at their local parish, which provided connection to their faith but not to their culture. In contrast, the Filipino Christian Church was the only religious institution that was devoted to the well-being of the Filipino community. As a result, the Filipino Christian Church drew membership from throughout the greater Los Angeles area. Members came from as far north as the San Fernando Valley, where Filipinos worked in the agricultural fields, and as far south as the Harbor area, where there was a substantial Filipino population living and working around the naval base.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, the Church continued to search for a larger and more permanent space. In 1936, it moved to a space at 306 Winston Street near Little Manila.<sup>38</sup> That same year, Rev. Pascua relinquished his position as Pastor in favor of his friend, Rev. Casiano Coloma, upon Coloma's graduation from California Christian College.<sup>39</sup> By this time, the Stipps had left the Filipino Christian Church to minister to another congregation, and the Church was joined by Miss Grace Lacock, a Sunday School teacher at nearby First Christian Church. Miss Lacock took over the role of sponsor and became the Director of Christian Education, a position she held until her death in 1986.<sup>40</sup> In this role, Miss Lacock oversaw the Church's day-to-day operations, while also being responsible for the children's work in the Church.<sup>41</sup> In 1940, the Church relocated yet again, this time moving into a former Chinese Presbyterian Church, which had been vacated due to the razing of Chinatown to make way for the construction of Union Station.<sup>42</sup> The Filipino Christian Church remained at this location for ten years.<sup>43</sup>

Beginning in the 1930s, the Filipino Christian Church played a vital role in the spiritual, civic, and cultural advancement of the Filipino American community in the Los Angeles area.<sup>44</sup> Participation in Church-sponsored activities rose dramatically during this period. Rev. Pascua attributed this growth to the fact that:

the American protestant churches had a committee meeting. They decided that since the Disciples of Christ Christian Church had more success among the Filipinos, they would delegate the Christian Church to take care of the Filipinos in Southern California. So, since the Filipinos who were Presbyterian, Methodists or others, including Catholics, had no church building at the time, many of them came to the Filipino Christian Church.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Marcel Ines Suetos, "Doroteo and Petra Ines" in *Filipino American Experience*, 38-39. Filipino Protestant churches did not appear in substantial numbers until the 1980s with later waves of immigration from the Philippines.

<sup>38</sup> Demolished.

<sup>39</sup> Balderama in *Filipino American Experience*, 19.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>41</sup> Suetos in *Filipino American Experience*, 38.

<sup>42</sup> The Chinese Presbyterian Church was located at 150 N. Los Angeles Street; demolished.

<sup>43</sup> *SurveyLA: Filipino Americans in Los Angeles*, 27; Balderama in *Filipino American Experience*, 20.

<sup>44</sup> *U.S. Asian Post*, August 4-10, 2017; *Filipino American Experience*, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Balderama in *Filipino American Experience*, 19-20.

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A high point came in 1942 when Jaime Hernandez, personal representative of Philippine President Manuel Quezon, traveled to Los Angeles to attend a gathering of Filipinos of the Western States, Alaska, and Hawaii held at the Filipino Christian Church.<sup>46</sup>

During the 1930s and 1940s, the Church's membership continued its rapid growth. Recognizing its role in the larger Filipino American community, the Filipino Christian Church welcomed persons of various faiths, and organized a variety of social and recreational activities. Perhaps the most important of these activities was the community lunch held after Sunday services, where church members and community members gathered to socialize. Additional activities organized by the Filipino Christian Church during this period included a church choir, prayer meetings, family gatherings, Friday night youth fellowship, holiday banquets, Christmas pageants, caroling at local hospitals and nursing homes, talent and fashion shows, Sunday school, field trips and retreats, weekend picnics, and tennis tournaments. During this same period, the children's annual summer camp, Camp Throne, was established in the San Bernardino Mountains, where church members served as counselors and chaperones. The Church also funded a scholarship for Chapman University.

As early as the late 1930s, Filipinos began moving out of Little Manila, first to the Bunker Hill area and then to the area around Temple and Figueroa Streets, on the northern edge of downtown. While Bunker Hill and its vicinity continued to house Filipinos through the 1940s, numerous Filipino businesses and social organizations began migrating to the Temple-Figueroa neighborhood, and many Filipino American families began purchasing homes and establishing new businesses in that area. Despite the dispersal of Los Angeles' Filipino American community during this period, participation at Filipino Christian Church events remained high. In 1943, at a convention of Christian Churches and Churches of Christ held in Long Beach, the Filipino Christian Church of Los Angeles was commended for its program of development to meet the needs of Filipinos in Southern California.<sup>47</sup> During this period, the Filipino Christian Church was the acknowledged center of the Filipino American community in Los Angeles.

On July 4, 1946, the Republic of the Philippines was granted full independence by the United States, and the annual immigration quota for the Philippines was raised from fifty to one hundred.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps more importantly, in 1948, the California Supreme Court overturned anti-miscegenation laws in *Perez v. Sharp*.<sup>49</sup> This had a significant impact on the Filipino American community, as the absence of Filipina women meant that many young Filipino men married outside their race, often traveling out of state to do so. This trend was reflected in the racial diversity of the Filipino Christian Church's membership, which included a number of racially mixed families.

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<sup>46</sup> "Quezon Aide Reaches City," *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1942. Manuel Quezon served as president of the Commonwealth of the Philippines from 1935 to 1944.

<sup>47</sup> "Church Group Votes Good Will to Jap Evacuees," *Los Angeles Times*, August 1, 1943.

<sup>48</sup> *SurveyLA: Filipino Americans in Los Angeles*, 32. Nearly 40,000 Filipinos immigrated to the United States between 1946 and 1965.

<sup>49</sup> In *Perez v. Sharp*, the California Supreme Court ruled that anti-miscegenation laws violated the Fourteenth Amendment and were therefore unconstitutional.

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### *A Permanent Home*

In 1947, Rev. Coloma and his family returned to their native Philippines, and ministerial duties at Filipino Christian Church were taken over once again by Rev. Pascua. In 1949, the Filipino Christian Church filed for incorporation with the State of California.<sup>50</sup> By 1950, the City announced large-scale redevelopment plans for the central city area, including the Little Manila portion of Little Tokyo, and the Filipino Christian Church was once again looking for a new home.<sup>51</sup> In 1950, Rev. Pascua and Miss Grace Lacock were alerted to the availability of an early twentieth century church building at the corner of Union Avenue and Court Street, in what was referred to as the Temple-Beverly corridor, just west of Temple-Figueroa. Rev. Pascua immediately contacted the Disciples of Christ Board of Church Extension and was soon gifted a down payment and interest-free loan. With this, along with some financial assistance from the Church's State Board of Southern California, as well as funds raised by congregants, the building was purchased outright for \$32,500 cash. In early 1951, the Filipino Christian Church held its first services in its permanent home at 301 N. Union Avenue.<sup>52</sup> This welcome turn of events came three years early, as the Church had established a goal of purchasing a new space in time for its twentieth anniversary in 1953. The Filipino Christian Church's move to Union Avenue and the Temple-Beverly corridor is regarded as the origin of what became Historic Filipinotown.

### *Change and Growth in the Postwar Era*

In the 1950s, the Temple-Beverly corridor evolved into a vibrant community of Filipino owned and operated businesses, institutions, and organizations. By this time, Filipinos were permitted to purchase property in the United States. In Los Angeles, many Filipino families bought their first homes in the Temple-Beverly corridor, establishing firm roots in this growing community.<sup>53</sup> As Filipina American writer Valorie Slaughter Bejarano noted of this period: "Filipinos were able to slowly merge into the middle-class after years of discrimination...What had started as a bachelor society recruited to work in the agricultural industry in Hawaii and California, became a close-knit community that no longer had to hide from racist, anti-Asian sentiments."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Voice of Pat de Vera in *Filipino American Experience*, 102.

<sup>51</sup> *SurveyLA: Filipino Americans in Los Angeles*, 36. The 1952 construction of a new Los Angeles Police Department on the western edge of Little Tokyo resulted in the eviction of many Filipino, African American, and Japanese residents and businesses, including the Filipino Christian Church. A few years later, the City's Community Redevelopment Agency obtained federal funding for the Bunker Hill Urban Renewal Project, which eventually leveled hundreds of multi-unit apartments, including the former Filipino Center. By the mid-1950s, almost all of Little Manila, Bunker Hill, and the Temple-Figueroa district had been destroyed by City-sponsored redevelopment projects and freeway construction.

<sup>52</sup> Toribio B. Castillo in *Filipino Christian Church: 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1933-1998* (Unpublished booklet, June 28, 1998); Pascua, "As the years went by..."

<sup>53</sup> Montoya, 8.

<sup>54</sup> *Filipinotown: Voices from Los Angeles*, Carlene Sobrino Bonnivier, Garald G. Gubatan, and Gregory Villanueva, Eds. (unpublished book, 2014), 193.

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As more Filipino immigrants began arriving in Los Angeles after the war, the Filipino Christian Church became a receiving ground of sorts, a place of welcome where new arrivals could congregate and socialize, regardless of faith, bonded by their common ancestry. For those with no place to stay, the parsonage might become a temporary home for a few days until more permanent housing arrangements could be made.<sup>55</sup> By this time, the Filipino Christian Church had grown to nearly 200 members, and was the largest body of Protestant Filipinos in the Southland.<sup>56</sup> By some accounts, the Filipino Christian Church was “the largest Filipino Protestant congregation in the United States” and was acknowledged as the center of Filipino American community activities in Southern California.<sup>57</sup>

The Filipino Christian Church was also the owner of an aging church building, so maintenance and repair became an ongoing challenge. Dedicated members of the congregation devoted countless volunteer hours to the building’s upkeep. As remembered by one congregant:

The struggles of maintaining this church required many hands for labor, sacrifice of time, contributions of financial support, and dedication to a common purpose. Many times I recall members of the church having to rally together to fix a leaking roof that had damaged much of the upper floor area, repair and paint the plaster walls that were damaged, remove the soiled books and carpeting, attend to the yard and flower beds, repair the plumbing, among other maintenance needs. The men and women of the Filipino Christian Church voluntarily and unselfishly made sure that these needs were taken care of on a weekly basis. They understood the importance of keeping their place of worship and fellowship in good condition and ready before any special occasion and before the next Sunday came. They took pride in being blessed with a place of “their own.”<sup>58</sup>

As the city’s Filipino American population grew throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the needs of the community became ever more complex. To meet these evolving needs, this period saw an unprecedented proliferation of Filipino-serving community groups and organizations, from social service organizations to groups dedicated to promoting ethnic pride among new immigrants and American-born Filipinos. As the earliest church organization in Los Angeles to cater to Filipino Americans, the Filipino Christian Church became an incubator for many key organizations that emerged during this period. Many of the most important organizations serving the Filipino American community in Southern California were originally founded, led, or supported by the core membership of the Filipino Christian Church.

Members of the Filipino Christian Church served as early presidents of the Filipino Community of Los Angeles (later the Filipino American Community of Los Angeles, or FACLA), one of the

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<sup>55</sup> Suetos in *Filipino American Experience*, 37; Voice of Priscilla Reyes in *Filipino American Experience*, 70.

<sup>56</sup> “New Pastor Presides at Filipino Services,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 26, 1947; *Filipino American Experience*, 77.

<sup>57</sup> Voice of Rodolfo Dumapias, “Developing Filipino Pride and Culture, Los Angeles 1950s-1980s” in *Filipino American Experience*, 77.

<sup>58</sup> Suetos in *Filipino American Experience*, 38.

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earliest Filipino American organizations in the country.<sup>59</sup> The formation of FACLA marks the beginning of a long-standing and continuing trend of Filipino Christian Fellowship and Church members serving as prominent community leaders, pioneering and actively participating in numerous Filipino organizations. Filipino Christian Church members formed Filipino student clubs at Chapman College and the University of Southern California (USC). Church members founded the first Sinaitenians of California,<sup>60</sup> the Philippine Junior Cultural Organization (PJCO, later called the Filipino Youth Club),<sup>61</sup> and the Los Angeles Downtown Evening Optimist Club. Church members co-founded junior and senior chapters of the Los Angeles Philippine Women's Club (LAPWC)<sup>62</sup> and the Los Angeles Filipino American Basketball League.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, church members have served as president of the United Filipino Community Association of Southern California and been active in various Legionario groups and hometown associations.

In some instances, the Filipino Christian Church building was the original home of these organizations, as its basement social hall hosted countless community groups, activities, and functions over the decades. The social hall held gatherings for the Pangasinan Association, and hosted events coordinated by local Filipino lodges. Filipino Christian Church members founded the local chapter of the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS), which held its meetings at the church. The Filipino Cultural School, a volunteer dance and cultural troupe, used the Church's social hall as its rehearsal space during its early years.<sup>64</sup> In 1985, the Church donated a room on its basement level to house the Filipino American Library, where the library remained for nearly ten years.<sup>65</sup> The Filipino Christian Church also maintains a History Photo Gallery on the wall of its social hall, which chronicles the history of the Filipino Christian Church and its role in the advancement of the Filipino American community of Los Angeles.<sup>66</sup>

One of the most influential organizations to evolve out of the Filipino Christian Church is the Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA). Founded by Royal Frank "Uncle Roy" Morales in 1972 in the basement of the Filipino Christian Church, where it remained for its first dozen

<sup>59</sup> Montoya, 102; Filipino American Community of Los Angeles, accessed April 2018, <http://newfacla.org>. Founded in 1945 as a halfway house for Filipino farm workers, FACLA occupies a 1965 social hall called the Filipino American Cultural Center in Historic Filipinotown.

<sup>60</sup> Sinaitenians of California was formed in 1932 as the Annak Ti Sinait Association.

<sup>61</sup> Rodolfo Dumapias in *Filipino American Experience*, 77. The PJCO was the first Filipino American youth group to be organized by the youth themselves, established by students from L.A. City College, UCLA, USC, Cal State L.A., and others.

<sup>62</sup> The Los Angeles Philippine Women's Club was founded in 1961, making it the first Filipino American chapter of the organization.

<sup>63</sup> Beginning in the 1970s, coaches actively recruited from the streets of what became Historic Filipinotown as means of diverting Filipino youth away from gangs, drugs, and alcohol.

<sup>64</sup> Filipino Cultural School, accessed April 2018, <http://www.filipinoculturalschool.org/>. The Filipino Cultural School was organized in 1965 to promote Philippine arts and culture at local community events.

<sup>65</sup> Filipino American Library, accessed April 2018, <http://www.filipinoamericanlibrary.com/>; *Filipino American Experience*, 113-114; Montoya, 20, 85. The Filipino American Library of Los Angeles was founded in 1985 as the Pilipino American Reading Room and Library (PARRAL), documenting the social, cultural, and political history of Filipinos in the Philippines and the United States. The library is administered by the Filipino American Heritage Institute. It is believed to be the first Filipino library in the United States and the largest Filipino library outside of the Philippines.

<sup>66</sup> The History Photo Gallery was established in 2010 as the Filipino American Museum of Culture and History.

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years, SIPA is “the largest, community-based charitable non-profit organization primarily serving Filipino Americans in the United States.”<sup>67</sup> Uncle Roy’s ties to the Filipino Christian Church were lifelong. The son of Rev. Morales, the Filipino Christian Fellowship’s first minister, Uncle Roy was born at the Filipino Center on Bunker Hill. Raised in the Ilocos province of the Philippines, Roy returned to Los Angeles in 1951 to study at Chapman College, later receiving a master’s degree in social work from USC. Referring to the Filipino Christian Church as his “anchor” during this period, he soon became involved in many of its community outreach programs.<sup>68</sup> Uncle Roy worked as a social worker, college professor, and community organizer, with an emphasis on youth, substance abuse, and mental health issues in the Pacific Asian community generally, and the Filipino American community in particular.<sup>69</sup> He taught classes in social work at USC, and in Filipino American studies at UCLA.<sup>70</sup> He always maintained his connection with the Filipino Christian Church, teaching Sunday School to middle and high school students, and calling upon members of the service-oriented congregation to assist in his various endeavors.<sup>71</sup> When he gave “Roy’s Community Tour of Los Angeles,” a tour of sites important to Filipino immigrants in Los Angeles, the Filipino Christian Church was the first stop.<sup>72</sup>

At the same time that Los Angeles’ Filipino American community was becoming more organized, it was also becoming more geographically dispersed. Under the G.I. Bill, many Filipinos who had served in the armed forces during World War II were able to purchase homes, often relocating to more suburban communities. Beginning in the mid-1960s, changes in U.S immigration policy that eliminated national origin quotas in favor of family reunification resulted in a massive new wave of Filipino immigrants in Los Angeles.<sup>73</sup> While some of this new generation of Filipinos joined first, second, and third generation Filipino Americans living in the Temple-Beverly corridor, many settled in other parts of Los Angeles.

Despite this dispersal of the region’s Filipino American population, many early members maintained their active participation in the Filipino Christian Church throughout their lives, passing along this commitment to their children and grandchildren. Thus, it is not uncommon to find three or even four generations of a single family at the Church.<sup>74</sup> Many of the most active church members were traveling greater distances, from the San Fernando Valley or South Los Angeles, the Westside or the South Bay, in order to attend Sunday services and the luncheon that

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<sup>67</sup> Search to Involve Pilipino Americans, accessed April 2018, <https://www.sipa-online.org>. SIPA’s stated mission is to enhance the quality of life in Los Angeles’ Historic Filipinotown and for Pilipino Americans throughout Los Angeles County.

<sup>68</sup> Morales in *Shades of L.A. Interview Project*, 2.

<sup>69</sup> Morales in *Filipino American Experience*, 22, 24-25.

<sup>70</sup> Morales in *Filipino American Experience*, 26. Both USC and UCLA have awards established in Uncle Roy’s honor.

<sup>71</sup> Morales in *Filipino American Experience*, 26; Morales in *Shades of L.A. Interview Project*, 10. Roy Morales was also married at the Filipino Christian Church and his children attend services there.

<sup>72</sup> *Filipinotown: Voices*, 89; “Celebrating the Life and Legacy of UCLA’s ‘Uncle Roy,’” *Los Angeles Times*, May 18, 1996.

<sup>73</sup> *SurveyLA: Filipino Americans in Los Angeles*, 43.

<sup>74</sup> Di Meo and Obillo in *Filipino American Experience*, 58.

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followed.<sup>75</sup> This was so much the case that services were held no earlier than 11:00 am, to allow time for members to make the trip. As one congregant stated, “Despite the distance, my parents were devoted to the church and served as summer camp cooks and prepared lunch for the church Sunday luncheon once a month for over fifty years. The church was a big part of their life.”<sup>76</sup>

In 1971, the Sylmar earthquake struck in the San Fernando Valley, causing extensive damage throughout the Los Angeles region. The Filipino Christian Church suffered structural damage to portions of the building with unreinforced brick construction, including the south wall (along Court Street) and the three-story bell tower at the southwest corner. The damage to the Filipino Christian Church building from the earthquake was estimated at \$25,000.<sup>77</sup> The earthquake was an ominous start to a turbulent decade for the Filipino Christian Church. The 1970s was a period of transition for the Temple-Beverly corridor generally, and for the Filipino Christian Church in particular. As more Filipino Americans began moving out of the area to more distant suburbs, the demographics of the neighborhood changed and the membership of the Filipino Christian Church slowly began to decline. By the 1980s, much of the city’s Filipino American population had dispersed throughout the Greater Los Angeles region, and were being joined by the next wave of immigration from the Philippines.

### Post-Period of Significance

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the local Filipino American community took several important steps toward preserving and commemorating their unique history in Los Angeles, all of which have direct links to the Filipino Christian Church. In 1995, artist Eliseo Art Silva created the nation's largest Filipino American mural at Unidad Park in Filipinotown. The painted mural, entitled “Gintong Kasaysayan, Gintong Pamana” (*A Glorious History, A Golden Legacy*), depicts the history of the Filipinos over time, from their fight to overthrow Spanish domination in the Philippines, to their struggles and accomplishments in the United States.<sup>78</sup> Fittingly, the Filipino Christian Church is depicted at the center of the mural.

In 1995, the Filipino Christian Church officially changed its name to the Filipino Disciples Christian Church. In 1998, the congregation sought and received local historic designation of their church building at 301 N. Union Avenue when the Los Angeles City Council designated the Filipino Christian Church as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 651 for its “influential role in the development of the Filipino American community in Los Angeles.”<sup>79</sup> Not surprisingly, Uncle Roy was the driving force behind the campaign for historic designation, which was strongly endorsed by the congregation and the church’s Board of Directors.<sup>80</sup> To date, this is one of just two designated Historic-Cultural Monuments in the city with Filipino origins,

<sup>75</sup> Voice of Donna Valera-Castillo in *Filipino American Experience*, 92.

<sup>76</sup> Voice of Yvonne Rallonza-Park in *Filipino American Experience*, 52.

<sup>77</sup> “3 L.A. Units Receive Aid,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 13, 1971.

<sup>78</sup> *Filipino American Experience*, 7; Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles, accessed April 2018, <http://muralconservancy.org/>.

<sup>79</sup> *Historic-Cultural Monument Application*.

<sup>80</sup> *Filipino American Experience*, 8.



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and the only one located in Filipinotown.<sup>81</sup> Also in 1998, the Los Angeles City Council and then-Councilman Eric Garcetti adopted a resolution recognizing the Disciples of Christ and the Filipino Christian Church for the important role they have played in the history and cultural development of the Filipino American community in Los Angeles.<sup>82</sup>

In 2002, after years of community effort to bring attention to the important contributions made by Filipino Americans in Los Angeles, the City Council unanimously approved the designation of a portion of the Temple-Beverly corridor as “Historic Filipinotown.”<sup>83</sup> In creating Historic Filipinotown, it was acknowledged that this is not the only Filipino enclave in the Los Angeles area, and Filipinos are a numerical minority in this ethnically diverse neighborhood. Despite this demographic shift, however, the area continues to have one of the highest concentrations of Filipino Americans in Southern California, and is home to key Filipino organizations, including Filipino churches, housing complexes, and social service centers.<sup>84</sup>

While some Filipino American families began purchasing homes and establishing businesses in the area as early as the 1940s, many consider the relocation of the Filipino Christian Church in 1951 to have been the catalyst for other organizations and institutions moving to the Temple-Beverly corridor. Historic Filipinotown is considered the cultural heart of the Filipino American community in Los Angeles, and Filipino Christian Church one of its oldest and most significant institutions. In 2012, Historic Filipinotown was designated as one of the nation’s Preserve America Communities, providing strong Federal support and incentives for the continued preservation of its cultural and natural heritage resources.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> In 1994, the 1904 Auguste R. Marquis Residence in West Adams was designated Historic-Cultural Monument No. 602. Its historic significance is due in part to being the long-term home of the Filipino Federation of America (FFA), founded by General Hilario Camino Moncado in 1925 to promote a “vice-free lifestyle” among Filipinos in California and throughout the United States. The FFA relocated to this house in the 1940s, where it remains.

<sup>82</sup> *U.S. Asian Post*, August 4-10, 2017.

<sup>83</sup> Montoya, 7, 91. Historic Filipinotown was created by a City Council resolution on August 2, 2002. The district comprises the southwest portion of Echo Park, and is bounded by Hoover Street on the west, Glendale Boulevard on the east, Temple Street on the north, and Beverly Boulevard on the south.

<sup>84</sup> Historic Filipinotown, accessed April 2018, <http://www.historicfilipinotown.org/>.

<sup>85</sup> Preserve America, accessed April 2018, <http://www.preserveamerica.gov/index.html>.

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February 8, 1986.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: Filipino Christian Church

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.067657 Longitude: -118.264409

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is composed of two parcels (APN #5159-004-002 and #5159-004-0030), consisting of Lots 2 and 4, Block 8 of Highland Tract Addition No. 1 (M.R. 6-385).

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary coincides with the parcels owned by the Filipino Christian Church during the period of significance.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kari Fowler, Senior Preservation Planner  
organization: Historic Resources Group  
street & number: 12 S. Fair Oaks Avenue, Suite 200  
city or town: Pasadena state: CA zip code: 91105  
e-mail: [kari@historicrosourcesgroup.com](mailto:kari@historicrosourcesgroup.com)  
telephone: (626) 793-2400  
date: April 2018; Revised June 2018

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Filipino Christian Church  
City or Vicinity: Los Angeles  
County: Los Angeles  
State: California  
Photographer: Robby Aranguren  
Date Photographed: April 4, 2018  
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 24 East (primary) facade, west view  
2 of 24 South façade, north view  
3 of 24 South façade, northeast view

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- 4 of 24 South and west façades and parsonage, east view
- 5 of 24 West façade and parsonage, southeast view
- 6 of 24 West façade detail, east view
- 7 of 24 West façade detail, east view
- 8 of 24 North façade, west view
- 9 of 24 Detail, front porch on the east (primary) façade, northwest view
- 10 of 24 Detail, bell from the bell tower, southwest view
- 11 of 24 Detail, cornerstone, north view
- 12 of 24 Interior, main entrance doors with stained-glass fanlight, southeast view
- 13 of 24 Interior, sanctuary and altar, north view
- 14 of 24 Interior, sanctuary and altar, northeast view
- 15 of 24 Interior, sanctuary, south view
- 16 of 24 Interior, sanctuary, southwest view
- 17 of 24 Interior, detail of large stained-glass window on south facade, southwest view
- 18 of 24 Interior, detail of stained-glass windows and light fixtures, northwest view
- 19 of 24 Interior, detail of wood pew with carved details on end panel, southeast view
- 20 of 24 Interior, detail of immersion baptismal font, northwest view
- 21 of 24 Interior, annex, southeast view
- 22 of 24 Interior, pastor's office, southeast view
- 23 of 24 Interior, Grace Social Hall, facing south
- 24 of 24 Interior, Grace Social Hall, facing southwest

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- 5 of 18 Building Permit, 1909
- 6 of 18 Sanborn Map, 1953
- 7-13 *Shades of L.A.: Filipino American Community collection, LAPL*
- 7 of 18 Filipino alumni homecoming event and worship service at the Filipino Christian Church, 1951; Rev. Pascua is second from the left.
- 8 of 18 Filipino Christian Church Women's Club members in traditional dresses, 1955.
- 9 of 18 Christmas play at the Filipino Christian Church, 1955.
- 10 of 18 Christmas play audience at the Filipino Christian Church, 1955.
- 11 of 18 Filipino Christian Church "Christmas Musical Fantasy Program" cover, 1955.
- 12 of 18 Filipino Christian Church Women's Fellowship, 1956; Miss Grace Lacock Inocencio is standing at far left; Rev. Felix Pascua is seated at center.
- 13 of 18 Filipino Christian Church interior, 1959
- 14-17 *Provided by the Filipino Christian Church*
- 14 of 18 Filipino Christian Church bell tower scaffolded after the 1971 Sylmar earthquake.
- 15 of 18 Filipino Christian Church brick damage from the 1971 Sylmar earthquake.
- 16 of 18 Filipino Christian Church, east façade, at the time of its local designation as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, 1997.
- 17 of 18 Filipino Christian Church, south façade, at the time of its local designation as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, 1997; parsonage since replaced.
- 18 of 18 Filipino Christian Church by Tony Reyes, n.d. (*Filipino American Experience*)



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**Figure 1.**



**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



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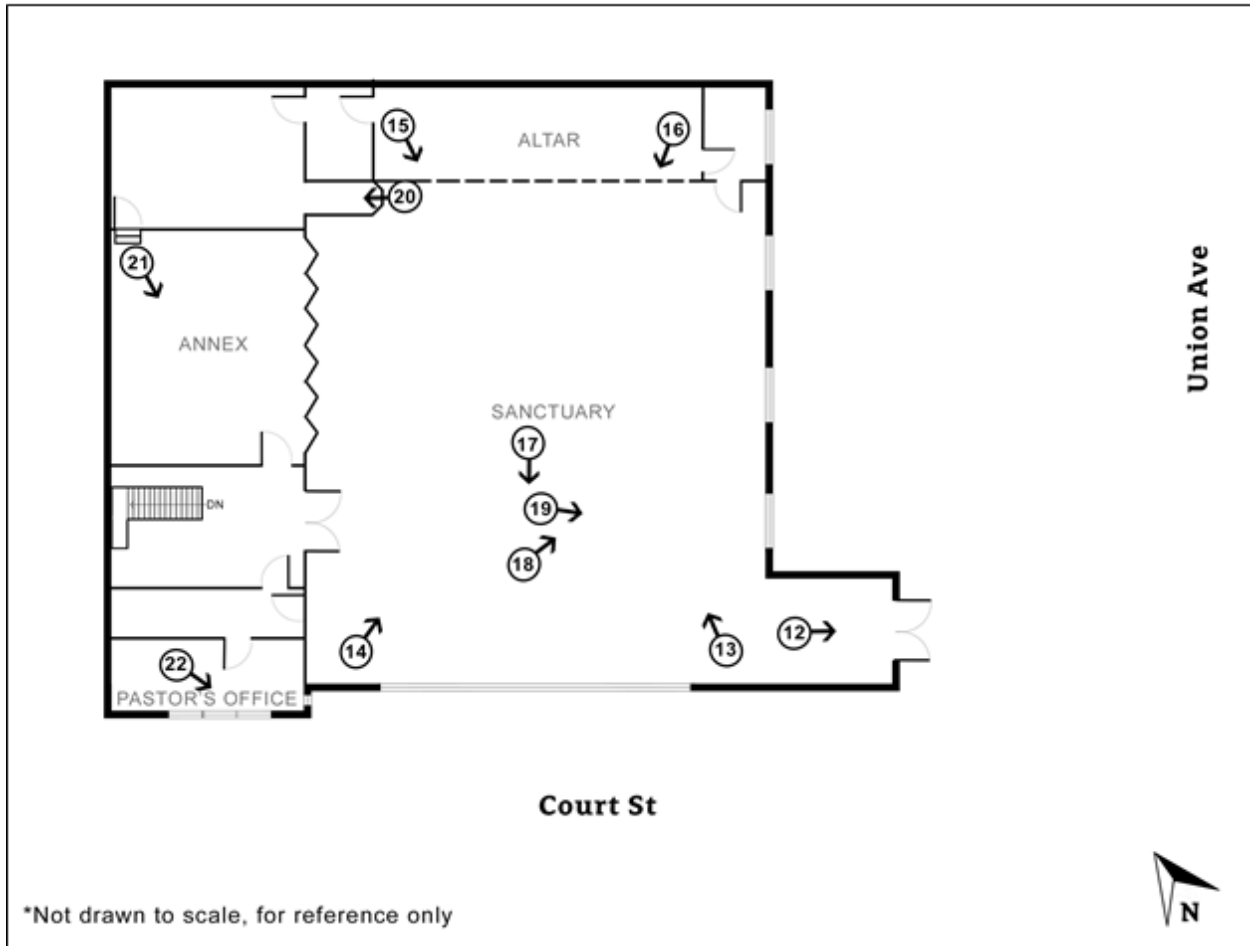
Figure 2.



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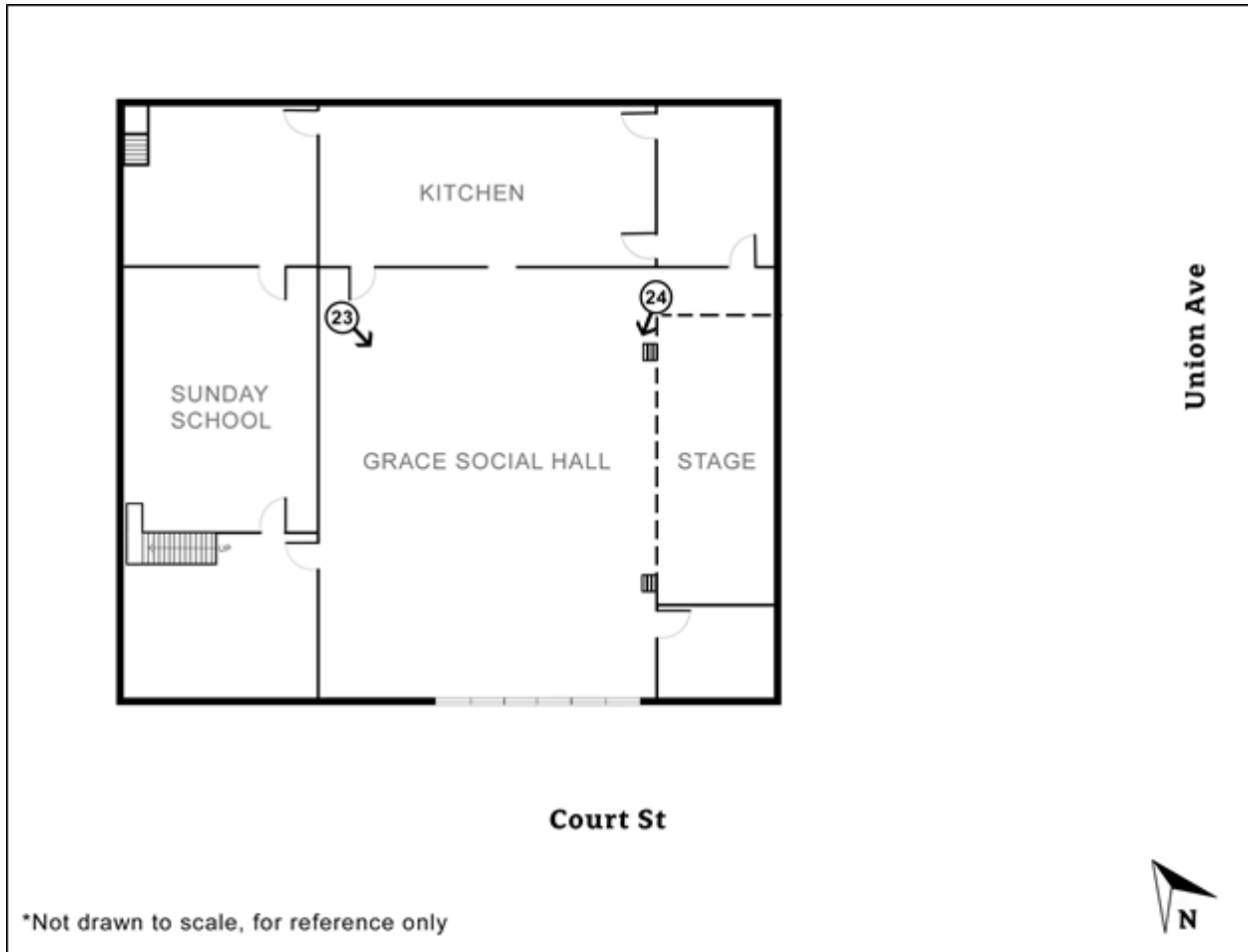
**Figure 3.**



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**Figure 4.**



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Figure 5.

**All applications must be filled out by applicant.**

WARD 2 Applicant must indicate the Building Line or Lines clearly and distinctly on the drawings.

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS  
 DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS  
**Application for Erection of Frame Buildings**  
 CLASS "D"

Application is hereby made to the Chief Inspector of Buildings of the City of Los Angeles, for the approval of the detailed statement of the specifications and plans herewith submitted for the erection of the building herein described. All provisions of the Building Ordinances shall be complied with in the erection of said building, whether specified herein or not.

(SIGN HERE) J. L. Bonetta  
 Los Angeles, Cal., AUG 18 1909, 1909

PLANS CHECKED BY C. G.

TAKE TO ROOM NO 6 FIRST FLOOR ASSESSOR PLEASE VERIFY  
 Lot No. E 132 ft of Lots 2 & 4 Block 8  
Highland Tract Add #1 Mapland  
 District No. 7 M. B. page 25 F. B. page 348

TAKE TO ROOM NO. 34 THIRD FLOOR ENGINEER PLEASE VERIFY  
 No. 301 N Union Street

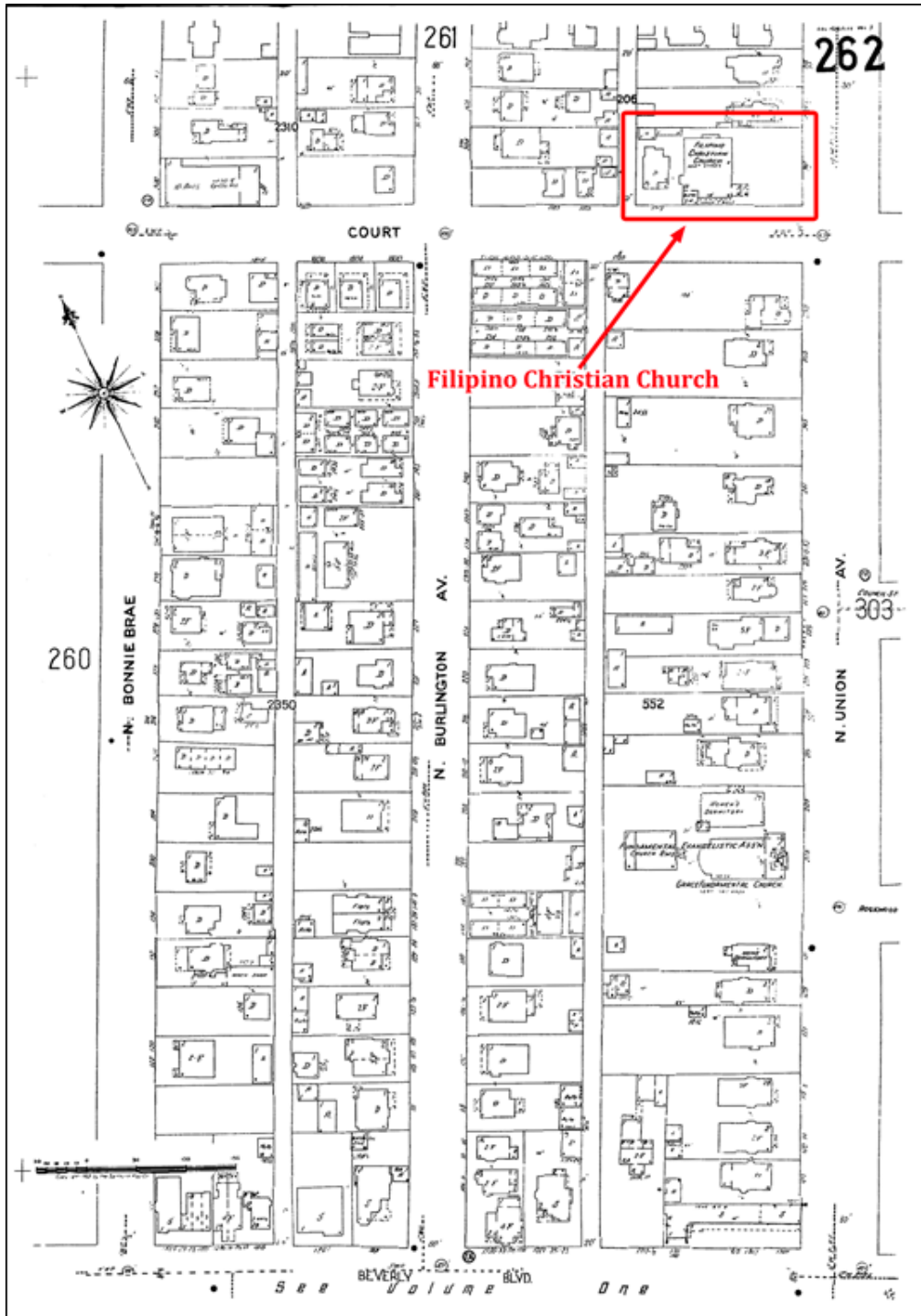
1. PURPOSE OF BUILDING Church Number of rooms \_\_\_\_\_
2. OWNER'S NAME Union Ave M. E. Church
3. Owner's address 301 Union Ave
4. Architect's name Jeffrey Van Dyke & Mills
5. CONTRACTOR'S NAME J. L. Bonetta
6. Contractor's address 6129 Piedmont Ave A. 8.504
7. ENTIRE COST OF PROPOSED BUILDING, \$ 8000.00
8. Size of lot \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ Size of building 64 x 52
9. Will building be erected on front or rear of lot? rear
10. NUMBER OF STORIES IN HEIGHT 2 Height to highest point of roof 45 ft
11. Height of first floor joist above curb level? 11 ft
12. Character of ground: rock, clay, sand, filled, etc. Double
13. Of what material will FOUNDATION and cellar walls be built? Concrete + Brick
14. GIVE depth of FOUNDATION below the surface of ground 1-6
15. GIVE dimensions of FOUNDATION and cellar wall footings 2-0
16. GIVE dimensions of FOUNDATION and cellar walls at top concrete 12" Brick 17"
17. NUMBER and KIND of chimneys 2 Brick Number of flues 2
18. Number of inlets to each flue 2 Interior size of flues 8x12 x 2-0x20"
19. Give sizes of following materials: MUDDSILLS 2 x 8 Girders and stringers 6 x 12  
 EXTERIOR STUDS 2 x 4 BEARING STUDS 2 x 6 Interior studs \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ceiling joist 2 x 4 Roof rafters 2 x 6 FIRST FLOOR JOISTS 2 x 12  
 SECOND FLOOR JOIST \_\_\_\_\_ Third floor joist \_\_\_\_\_ Fourth floor joist \_\_\_\_\_
20. Will the roof be peak, flat or mansard? Peak Material of roofing Shingles

Permit No. 1906 [Signature] **OVER**

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Figure 6.



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**Figure 7.**



**Figure 8.**





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**Figure 9.**



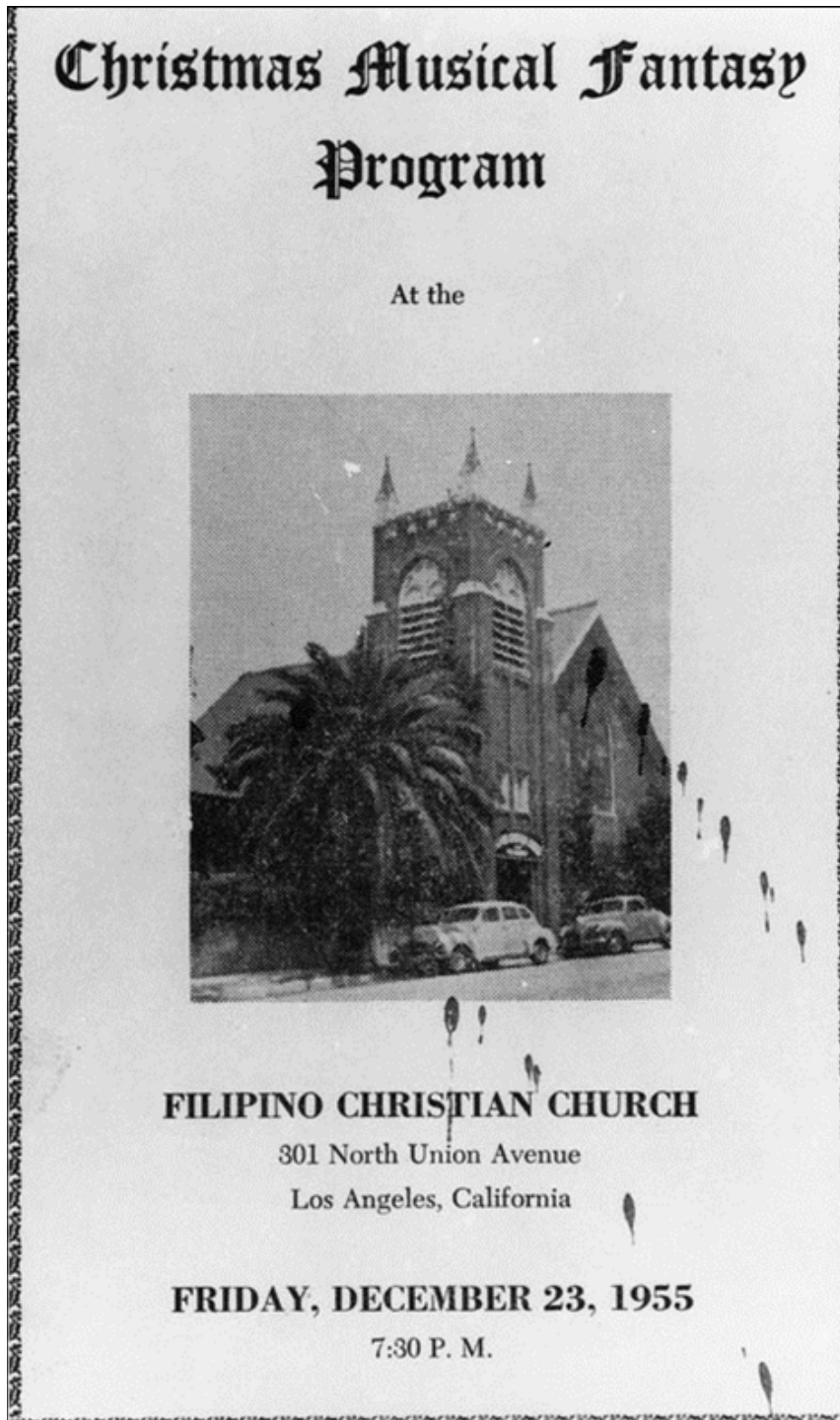
**Figure 10.**



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**Figure 11.**





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**Figure 12.**



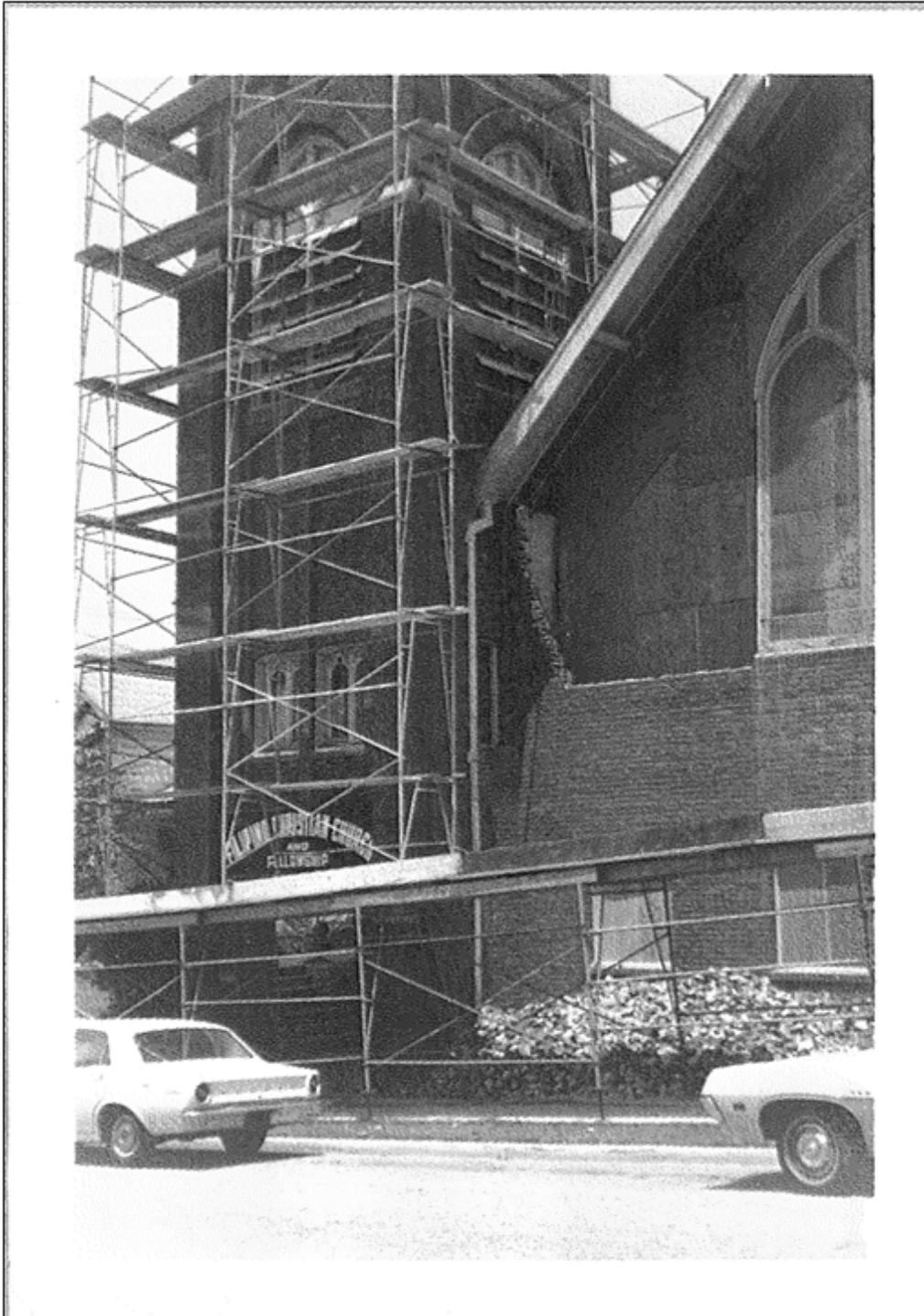
**Figure 13.**



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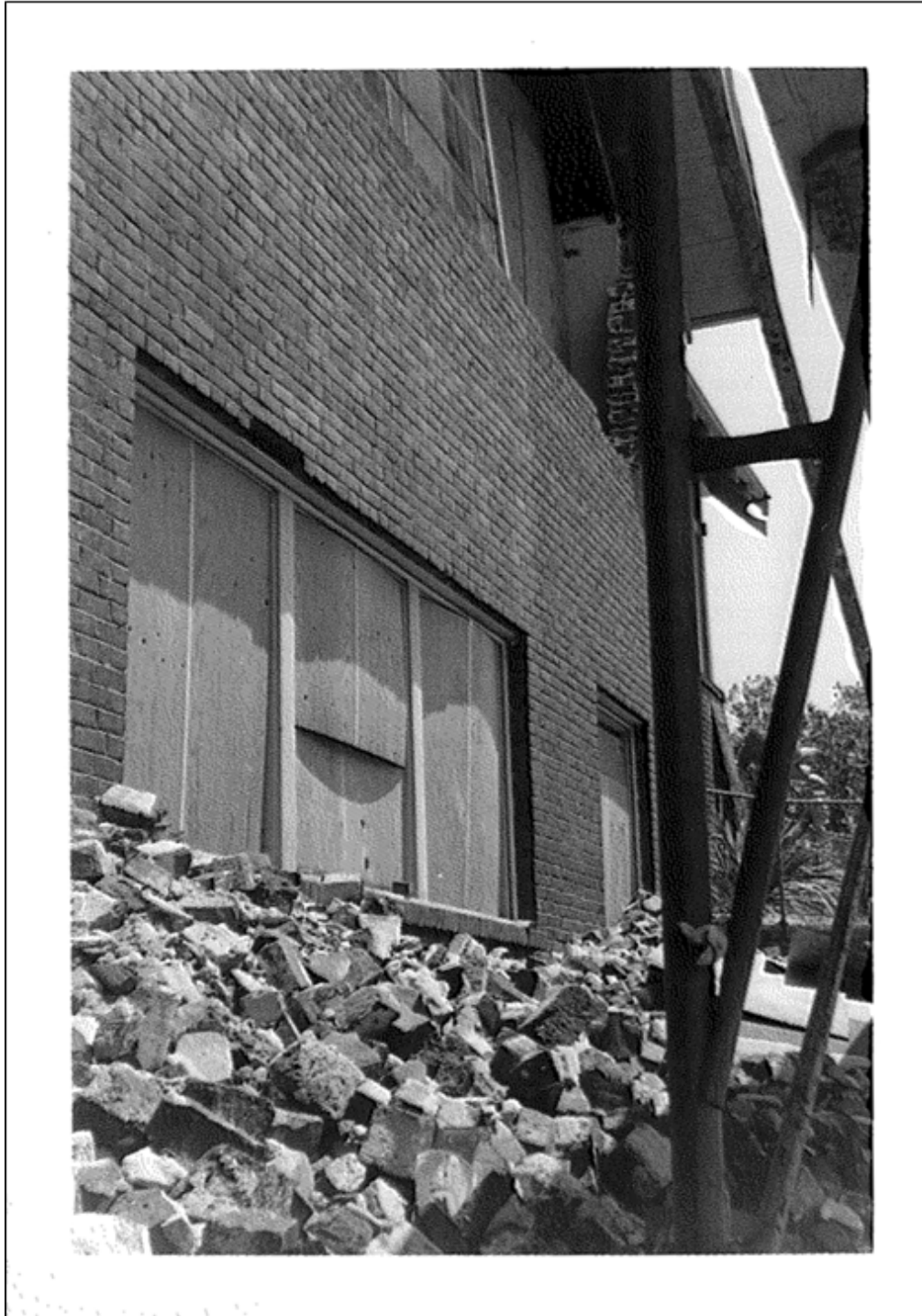
**Figure 14.**



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**Figure 15.**



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**Figure 16.**



**Figure 17.**



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**Figure 18.**

