

FINDINGS

- The Mechicano Art Center “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as the location of one of three organizations that made up the Chicano Arts Collective, which played an instrumental role in the Chicano arts movement and the cultural development of the Latino community in Los Angeles.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Mechicano Art Center meets one of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: it “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as the location of one of three organizations that made up the Chicano Arts Collective, which played an instrumental role in the Chicano arts movement and the cultural development of the Latino community in Los Angeles.

The 1960s and 1970s was a pivotal era for Latinos in Los Angeles. This was a time when Mexican American identity was fully integrated in national political life, propelled by their demographic, political, and cultural ascendance. By 1960, Los Angeles housed the largest Mexican American community in the United States. At the same time, the persistence of segregation and discrimination propelled a more robust push for rights and respect, which crystalized in the Chicano movement. The Chicano movement inspired new pride in Latino culture and identity and resistance against white hegemony, and Latino artists of all types banded together to form organizations such the Chicano Arts Collective. The groups under the umbrella of the Chicano Arts Collective expressed a growing desire on the part of Latinos in Los Angeles to convey their cultural pride to an outside audience. As one of the earliest Chicano art centers in Los Angeles, the Mechicano Art Center revolutionized the way that Latino art was produced, displayed, and received. Prior to its creation, mainstream art galleries were largely Anglo-centric and failed to show art made by Latinos. By establishing a space for underrecognized Chicano artists to produce and display their work, the Mechicano Art Center was instrumental in ushering in a new wave of artists to Highland Park, creating a concentration of Chicanos invested in their cultural heritage. The Mechicano Art Center’s legacy is in part due to the attention the organization garnered for Chicano artists, many of whom went on to achieve fame on a national and international scale. In addition, besides supporting professional artists, the Mechicano Art Center also sought to provide creative outlets for amateur artists and community members, including free classes in drawing, painting, graphic art, and photography for adults and children.

Despite the interior and exterior alterations that the Mechicano Art Center has experienced, it continues to retain sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association from the period of significance, 1975-1978.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (“CEQA”) FINDINGS

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 “*consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.*”

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 “*consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings.*”

The designation of the Mechicano Art Center as an Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code (“LAAC”) will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject property are regulated in accordance with Section 22.171.14 of the LAAC. The purpose of the designation is to prevent significant impacts to a Historic-Cultural Monument through the application of the standards set forth in the LAAC. Without the regulation imposed by way of the pending designation, the historic significance and integrity of the subject property could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of an irreplaceable historic site/open space. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject property.

The City of Los Angeles has determined based on the whole of the administrative record, that substantial evidence supports that the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 and Class 31, and none of the exceptions to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies. The project was found to be exempt based on the following:

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of historic buildings and sites in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Categorical Exemption ENV-2020-5213-CE was prepared on November 18, 2020.