



Armando Bencomo &lt;armando.bencomo@lacity.org&gt;

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## Public Comments Not Uploaded Nomination of Historic Cultural Monuments 21-0140 and 21-0136

1 message

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**Duncan Gregory** <duncan.gregory@highlandparknc.com>

Mon, Aug 16, 2021 at 11:53 AM

Reply-To: clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org

To: clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org

Hello members of PLUM,

My name is Duncan Gregory, I am the new President of the Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council. Last term, our board approved two letters that voiced the support of the historical designation of the buildings being discussed tomorrow for 21-0140 Mechicano and 21-0136 Centro. I am attaching these letters to this email just in case they fell through the cracks somewhere between now and when we voted. Do let me know if you need anything else from me, thanks so much for your consideration.

Best regards,  
Duncan Gregory  
President, HHPNC  
Zip 90042

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### 2 attachments

**Mechicano Arts.docx.pdf**

260K

**Centro de Arte Publico.docx.pdf**

273K

HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL  
Post Office Box 50791 Los Angeles, CA 90050  
www.highlandparknc.com  
Certified as NC #33 May 28, 2002

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## HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

December 3, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission  
200 North Spring Street, Room 272  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Re: Support for HCM Nominations of Proposed Monument: Mechicano Art Center,  
CHC-2020-5211-HCM**

Honorable members of the Cultural Heritage Commission.

We are writing to express our strong support for the designation of the building proposed by Highland Park Heritage Trust as a Historic Cultural Monument: the Mechicano Art Center located at 5337-5341 North Figueroa Street; 110 North Avenue 54

The building that housed the Mechicano Art Center serves as an important reminder of the history of the Chicano Movement in Highland Park and the artists who contributed to it with their creativity. It is essential that this history not be erased. The stories of these artists and of their contributions must not disappear. Latinxs cultural contributions and stories must be preserved. Throughout the City of Los Angeles buildings and murals that were important to the Chicano Movement are under threat of demolition or defacement. The designation of the Mechicano Art Center will preserve it for future generations.

The late 1960's through the 1970's was a turbulent time in the Eastside of Los Angeles. With the Vietnam war raging, Chicano youth in Los Angeles began demonstrating against the inferior

education that they were receiving and drop-out rates from 37 to 57 percent at area schools. Chicano youth were dying in Vietnam at rates twice their population percentages. It was a turbulent time and a creative time. The United Farm Workers began their grape boycott. The Teatro Campesino was born on flatbed trucks performing political art. Chicano Art exploded. With thousands of murals painted throughout Los Angeles, Los Angeles became the mural capital of the world. The Mechicano Art Center was an integral part of that explosion.

The Mechicano Art Center is an important part of Chicano history in Highland Park. Chicano history has been a story of struggle against discrimination and the activism that it motivated. Mechicano Art Center was a part of the Chicano Movement that told that story and inspired future artists. The Mechicano Art Center was a center for Highland Park artists who involved youth - some who were gang members - in their projects creating a new generation of artists and activists. Much of this art was political. It aimed to educate and tell the story of the Chicano from their own perspective. It was a history and a narrative that had long been ignored. In a recent interview, artist Ernesto De La Loza now 71, stated, ““These murals represented our struggles and our stories that weren’t being taught in history books.” (<https://www.dailychela.com/la-murals/>). Some of these murals still remain today inspiring a new generation of youth and artists and telling a story from the Chicano perspective. The designation of the Mechicano Art center as a Historic Cultural Monument will recognize the importance of this contribution to the Chicano movement and will act for the preservation of their works such as the murals in Ramona Gardens.

With increasing gentrification throughout the historic Chicano communities in Boyle Heights, Lincoln Heights and Highland Park it is essential that these contributions do not disappear. Over the years, many murals have been painted over and are now lost. The designation of the building that housed the Mechicano Art Center will ensure that their contributions and their history are not lost. It will help in the cause for preservation of those murals that are not yet lost. It will serve as a reminder of the creativity of a generation of artists and the contribution that they made to the Chicano movement. It will serve as a reminder to future generations of Chicanos of what is possible.

This building that housed the Mechicano Art Center is a part of the Historic Highland Park – Garvanza Historic Preservation Overlay Zone HPOZ. The building is considered a non-contributor because the period of significance for the HPOZ ends in 1961. This period of significance leaves buildings that were important to the Chicano Movement of the late 1960’s and 1970’s that are culturally significant without protection. We believe that these culturally significant sites are important and should be preserved and designated as such.

We hope that you will vote in favor of designating the building which housed the Mechicano Art Center as a Historic Cultural Monument. We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council