

El Barrio Free Clinic
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

HEALTH CARE/medical business/office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCIAL/department store

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other _____

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stucco, wood, and glass

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.)

Summary Paragraph

El Barrio Free Clinic was located in this single-story commercial building at 5012 East Whittier Boulevard in unincorporated East Los Angeles. The building is part of a low-rise commercial block on the south side of the street between Ciela Avenue to the east and Fraser Avenue to the west. The building was constructed in 1926, but major additions and alterations took place between 1936 and 1942.¹ The building has a U-shaped plan and stucco cladding with a distinctive projecting fin that supports additional signage above the flat roof. The centralized entrance is flanked by large display windows. The building has been altered over time, but retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance.

Narrative Description

The primary elevation of the building faces north towards Whittier Boulevard. Historic photographs from the period of significance indicate the building was Moderne in style, but now it includes Spanish Colonial Revival style features. The façade is clad in stucco. The entrance and display windows are sheltered by a shallow pent roof clad with clay tiles. West of the entrance, there is a fin arranged perpendicular to the building that extends past the roofline. The fin divides the façade into two bays. The east bay is occupied by the centrally located entrance

¹ "5012 WHITTIER BLVD LOS ANGELES CA 90022." Los Angeles County Assessor, accessed June 18, 2015, http://maps.assessor.lacounty.gov/GVH_2_2/Index.html?configBase=http://maps.assessor.lacounty.gov/Geocortex/Essentials/REST/sites/PAIS/viewers/PAIS_hv/virtualdirectory/Resources/Config/Default

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and a display window to the east. The entrance, flush with the façade, consists of a pair of fully-glazed doors topped by a narrow transom. A tall parapet extends from the fin above the pent roof. The west bay is occupied by a single display window and has no parapet. The display windows are large, two-light fixed windows with metal frames. Signage is mounted on both sides of the fin, which is designed to face both directions of traffic. On the west side of the fin, the signage reads, "Mission Furniture Factory Showroom," and on the east side of the fin, the signage reads, "Mission Furniture." Above the west side of the façade, there is signage that reads, "Mission Furniture Mfg. Factory Showroom."

The east elevation directly abuts an adjacent commercial building, though they do not appear to share a party wall. The west elevation faces a driveway, and consists of a solid stucco wall. At the rear (south) elevation, which appears to be an addition, the building is flush with an alley running parallel to Whittier Boulevard. The rear elevation is clad in stucco; two tilt-up garage doors, one aluminum and one wood, dominate the elevation.

Access to the interior was not granted, and therefore the interior cannot be described.

Alterations

The building has undergone some alterations since 1970, when it was last El Barrio Free Clinic. The fenestration pattern and cladding along the facade has been altered. Photographs from 1969 to 1970 show a stucco, glass, and cast masonry unit storefront with a central entrance. Glazed storefronts framed the entrance and were set back with bulkheads enclosing planters. The planters have been removed, and the entrance and windows have been reconfigured. The bulkheads were lowered and the cast masonry was removed or covered with new stucco cladding. The flat canopy shown in historic photographs appears to have been filled in with framing and stucco to create the pent roof. The condition of the interior is not known.

Integrity

El Barrio Free Clinic retains sufficient integrity as the headquarters of a prominent organization to meet the eligibility requirements as outlined in the primary *Chicano Moratorium in Los Angeles County* Multiple Property Submission as well as the secondary *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Submission. The building retains its integrity of location, as it has not been moved from where it was constructed in 1926 and where the clinic was located from 1969 to 1970. The integrity of setting is intact, as the surrounding neighborhood is much the same as it was during the period of significance: a low-rise commercial building surrounded by low-rise commercial buildings. The alteration of the fenestration pattern and addition of the parapet have altered the appearance of the facade since 1970. Though the building historically had minimal ornamentation, the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship is lacking due to removal of signage and remodeling of the façade. El Barrio Free Clinic no longer occupies the building; therefore, its integrity of association is compromised. Despite the alterations to the facade, the building retains its integrity of feeling, as the overall height, massing, plan, and structure remain intact. The fin is also a prominent design feature that remains. The building and its physical characteristics still invoke the feeling of mid-twentieth century vernacular commercial building on a dense commercial corridor. El Barrio Free Clinic retains the essential aspects of integrity - location, setting, and feeling - that enable it to convey its historic

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significance as the headquarters of a prominent organization located in the commercial center of the Latino community.

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 HERITAGE: Hispanic

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1969-1970

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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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.)

El Barrio Free Clinic is eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Hispanic, Social History, and Politics/Government, with a period of significance of 1969-1970. It meets the registration requirements for headquarters and offices of prominent organizations as outlined in the context of Making a Democracy: Latino Struggles for Inclusion in the primary *Chicano Moratorium in Los Angeles County* Multiple Property Submission as well as the secondary *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Submission. Established in 1969 by the Brown Berets, El Barrio Free Clinic represents the community service mission of the Brown Berets. The community service mission focused on overcoming limited access to health care and information about health as an underlying cause of inequality and poverty within the Chicano community. Through the free clinic, the Brown Berets sought to improve the lives of the Chicano community by providing access to health, education, and welfare resources that could offer opportunities for economic growth and political empowerment. Steered by female members of the Brown Beret organization, El Barrio Free Clinic represents the important role women played in the Chicano movement. The clinic is considered the most successful implementation of the Brown Berets' community service mission, representing the social agenda that differentiated Chicano Moratorium Committee from other antiwar efforts and created a legacy in the community beyond the antiwar protest era.

El Barrio Free Clinic meets the requirements Criteria Consideration G. The *Chicano Moratorium in Los Angeles County* Multiple Property Submission demonstrates that the events surrounding the Chicano Moratorium have been sufficiently studied by scholars to determine their exceptional importance to the County of Los Angeles.

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

El Barrio Free Clinic was founded in May 1969 by the Brown Berets and run by active members of the organization from its founding until December 1970.² Also known as "the Brown Beret Free Clinic,"³ El Barrio Free Clinic was the first free clinic in East Los Angeles and was established to address the specific health care needs of the Chicano community.⁴ The creation and management of the free clinic illustrates the leadership roles assumed by women in the Chicano movement. The clinic is cited as one of the Brown Berets' most impressive accomplishments.⁵ El Barrio Free Clinic promoted equal access to health care and demonstrated that the organizers of the Chicano Moratorium had a mission of social justice extending beyond the antiwar movement to address wider issues of social inequality.

² The clinic opened on May 30, 1969, although the idea was discussed as early as October 1968.

³ Myrna Johnson, "Inside the Barrio Free Clinic," *Elan* XXII, no. 2 (1972): 2-4.

⁴ Johnson, "Inside the Barrio Free Clinic," 2-4.

⁵ Marguerite V. Marin, *Social Protest in an Urban Barrio: A Student of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1974* (New York: University Press of American, 1991), 154.

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Chicano activists in the late 1960s recognized that for decades the Mexican American community in Los Angeles had been confined to separate neighborhoods, creating a basis of inequality that touched multiple realms of life, especially health care. Mexican neighborhoods suffered much higher rates of infant mortality and communicable disease than the general population. In 1927, one labor camp in Los Angeles County recorded the highest infant mortality rates in the U.S.⁶ Housing location dictated access to such “social resources and public accommodations as jobs, neighborhood schools, health care, grocery stores, public utilities, and religious and cultural institutions.”⁷ Activists were galvanized by statistics illustrating inequality. While statistics demonstrating disproportionate casualty rates for Latino soldiers in Vietnam spurred antiwar sentiment, the Chicano movement rallied around a cry of “La batalla esta aqui” (the battle is here), arguing that the real battle was in the United States, not in Vietnam. The money that was being spent on the war abroad would be better spent on improving health care, housing, and educational opportunities for Americans of color.

Part of the Brown Berets’ mission was community service to address social inequality, and they first proposed creating a health care clinic in 1968, shortly after their first meetings. The Brown Berets felt that it was essential for a Chicano group to create and manage a clinic for their community because they believed only a Chicano organization could truly identify and address the unique health care needs of the Chicano community. As Gloria Arellanes, a member of the Brown Berets who was chosen by the organization to serve as the founding director, explained, “At this time there were very few free clinics in existence, and those existing were for the hippie [sic] long haired Anglo youth.”⁸ David Sánchez, prime minister of the Brown Berets, wrote the initial proposal for the clinic as part of a class project at Cal State Los Angeles.⁹ The Brown Berets planned a free clinic for the Chicano community that emphasized family planning and basic health education instead of venereal disease and “freaked out acid trips...” that were the focus of existing free clinics in distant neighborhoods.¹⁰ Female Brown Berets, who played a vital role in the Moratorium Committee from its inception, took charge of the creation and management of the free clinic.¹¹

Located on Whittier Boulevard along a major commercial district in unincorporated East Los Angeles, El Barrio Free Clinic succeeded despite initial community skepticism about free medical services and the role of the Brown Berets, better known for their cultural nationalism than their community service. Facilities and operations at the clinic were modeled after Fairfax Free Clinic in Hollywood. All medical staff was volunteer. Financial help came from the Ford Foundation, United Way, and Catholic Church’s Campaign for Human Development. The Los

⁶ David Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 91-92.

⁷ Margaret Montoya, “Latinos and the Law,” in *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2013), 299.

⁸ Jaime Pelayo, “The Chicano Movement and the Vietnam War,” (unpublished senior thesis, Yale University, 1997) 33, located at Gloria Arellanes Papers, California State University Los Angeles.

⁹ David Sánchez Oral History Interview, UCLA Oral History Collection, accessed June 1, 2015, <http://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz002hkcv5&title=%20Sanchez,%20David>

¹⁰ Folder 2, Series I, Box 1, Gloria Arellanes Papers 1967-1979, Special Collections and Archives, John F. Kennedy Memorial Library, California State University, Los Angeles.

¹¹ Pelayo, “The Chicano Movement,” 4.

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Angeles Regional Family Planning Council donated supplies.¹² Women's health, family planning, and "well baby" initiatives were the services most in demand. The clinic provided services for Chicanas, especially adolescents, disseminating information that was not easily accessible in a community with limited financial resources and minimal geographic access to primary care physicians.

The Brown Berets began using one of the rooms in the clinic as a temporary headquarters in 1969.¹³ They added a large red cross on top of the building to ward off the Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies.¹⁴ The first meetings of the Moratorium Committee also took place at the clinic. Many Brown Berets hoped the legacy of their role in the Chicano movement would be as the leaders of a transition from antiwar protests to social justice.¹⁵

Internal conflicts within the Brown Berets led to the closure of the free clinic after a brief period of operation. The female members of Brown Berets resigned from the organization in February 1970 because of a political split and formed the all-female group Las Adelitas.¹⁶ The split had to do with the gender politics within the organization where men were assigned to leadership roles, while women were relegated to secretarial positions. Incidentally, this blatant sexism was endemic to the American countercultural movement, not just Mexican Americans. Remaining male Brown Berets were leery of aligning themselves with outside organizations, which alienated funding sources for the clinic.¹⁷ The United Way withdrew its financial support and the volunteer staff resigned. Gloria Arellanes and Las Adelitas formed another free clinic, La Clinica del Barrio, with many of El Barrio Free Clinic's volunteers.¹⁸ La Clinica del Barrio continued the "social-action agenda" without the participation of the Brown Berets and antiwar protest groups.¹⁹

Though El Barrio Free Clinic was not in operation for a long period of time, it had lasting effects on the community by setting a precedent for access to free and affordable health care in Los Angeles' eastside Latino community. The women who organized and managed the free clinic continued to play a role in the social justice components of the Chicano movement after leaving El Barrio Free Clinic. Las Adelitas created La Clinica del Barrio. AltaMed, an expansive network of health care clinics for the underserved communities of Southern California, was founded by several volunteers who participated in the creation of El Barrio Free Clinic and La Clinica del Barrio. At the AltaMed clinic in Montebello there is an interpretative display on the history of the organization that proudly traces its roots to El Barrio Free Clinic. With these clinics as its legacy, El Barrio Free Clinic demonstrated that the Brown Berets and Chicano

¹² Ruben Salazar, "Brown Berets Hail 'La Raza' and Scorn the Establishment," *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 1969, 3; Marin, *Social Protest in an Urban Barrio: A Student of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1974*, 154.

¹³ The moved to 2639-41 East Fourth Street in June of 1969.

¹⁴ David Sánchez Oral History Interview, UCLA Oral History Collection, accessed June 1, 2015, <http://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz002hkcv5&title=%20Sanchez,%20David>

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Mario García, *The Chicano Generation: Testimonios of the Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015) 191.

¹⁷ Marin, *Social Protest in an Urban Barrio: A Student of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1974*, 154.

¹⁸ La Clinica del Barrio opened March 15, 1971 at 274 Atlantic Boulevard.

¹⁹ Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 140.

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Moratorium Committee were not focused solely on protests, but on the everyday mission of bringing resources to an underserved community and creating systems with lasting impacts for social improvement of Chicano people through equal access to health and welfare.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Acuña, Rodolfo. *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 3rd ed. New York: Harper Collins, 1988.

García, Mario. *The Chicano Generation: Testimonios of the Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015.

Gloria Arellanes Papers 1967-1979. Special Collections and Archives, John F. Kennedy Memorial Library, California State University, Los Angeles.

Gutiérrez, David. *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Johnson, Myrna. "Inside the Barrio Free Clinic." *Elan* XXII, no. 2, 1972.

Marin, Marguerite V. *Social Protest in an Urban Barrio: A Student of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1974*. New York: University Press of American, 1991.

Montoya, Margaret. "Latinos and the Law," in *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study*. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2013.

Oropeza, Lorena. *¡Raza Si, Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism during the Viet Name War Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Pelayo, Jaime. "The Chicano Movement and the Vietnam War" (unpublished senior thesis, Yale University, 1997), Located in: Folder 2, Series V, Box 3, Gloria Arellanes Papers 1967-1979. Special Collections and Archives, John F. Kennedy Memorial Library, California State University, Los Angeles.

Salazar, Ruben. "Brown Berets Hail 'La Raza' and Scorn the Establishment," *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 1969.

UCLA Oral History Collection, Oral History Interviews with David Sánchez, 2015.

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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: California State University, Los Angeles; University of California, Los Angeles

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.020992

Longitude: -118.161149

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

Assessor Parcel Number 5245-004-016, which corresponds to the attached sketch map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the land area historically associated with the building.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Allison M. Lyons, Associate Architectural Historian

organization: GPA Consulting

street & number: 617 S. Olive Avenue

city or town: Los Angeles state: California zip code: 90014

e-mail: allison@gpaconsulting-us.com

telephone: (310) 792-2690

date: August 16, 2016

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:	El Barrio Free Clinic
City or Vicinity:	East Los Angeles
County:	Los Angeles
State:	California
Photographer:	Amanda Yoder
Date Photographed:	January 29, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

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CA_Los Angeles County_ChicanoMoratoriumMPS_ElBarrioFree_01: North and west elevations, camera facing southeast.

CA_Los Angeles County_ChicanoMoratoriumMPS_ElBarrioFree_02: West elevation, camera facing southeast.

CA_Los Angeles County_ChicanoMoratoriumMPS_ElBarrioFree_03: North elevation, camera facing southeast.

CA_Los Angeles County_ChicanoMoratoriumMPS_ElBarrioFree_04: North elevation detail, camera facing southeast.

CA_Los Angeles County_ChicanoMoratoriumMPS_ElBarrioFree_05: North elevation, camera facing south.

CA_Los Angeles County_ChicanoMoratoriumMPS_ElBarrioFree_06: North elevation, signage, camera facing southwest.

CA_Los Angeles County_ChicanoMoratoriumMPS_ElBarrioFree_07: South and west elevations, camera facing northeast.

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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Location Map

Latitude: 34.021081° Longitude: -118.161366°



Base map courtesy of Google Earth, property boundary outlined in red.

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Sketch Map/Photo Key



Base map courtesy of Los Angeles County Assessor.

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Additional Documentation



Figure 1: El Barrio Free Clinic in East Los Angeles, circa 1969. “Chicano Health and You!” brochure in Box 1 Series I: Subject/Topical Files, Gloria Arellanes Papers 1967-1979, Special Collections and Archives, John F. Kennedy Memorial Library, California State University, Los Angeles.

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Figure 2: Sidewalk outside El Barrio Free Clinic, circa 1969. Box 5 Series VI: Photographs, Gloria Arellanes Papers 1967-1979, Special Collections and Archives, John F. Kennedy Memorial Library, California State University, Los Angeles.