

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 27

*Resource Name: Self Help Graphics & Art

P1. Other Identifier: Brooklyn Savings Bank; Catholic Youth Organization

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County: Los Angeles

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. USGS 7.5' Quad:

Date:

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B.M.

c. Address: 3800 Cesar Chavez Boulevard

City: East Los Angeles

Zip: 90063

d. UTM: Zone: mE/ mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data: Assessor Parcel Number 5233-009-033

*P3a. Description:

Building Description

Located on the southeast corner of Cesar Chavez Avenue and Gage Avenue in unincorporated East Los Angeles, the subject property is situated on a major east-west thoroughfare connecting the eastern communities of Los Angeles and Monterey Park. The building fronts an urbanized commercial street with heavy automobile and pedestrian activity. A residential area consisting primarily of single-family and multi-family dwellings is located to the south of the subject property. The building, encompassing the northern portion of the parcel, is bound by an attached single-story commercial building to the east and an asphalt covered automobile parking area to the south.

(See Continuation Sheet)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: HP13 -- community center/social hall

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other



*P5b. Description of Photo:
Southwest view (2009)

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and

Sources: Historic

Prehistoric Both

1927 (*Los Angeles Times*)

*P7. Owner and Address:

Paul Pagnone & Ron Insalaco
Piedmont Investment Company
3176 Glendale Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90039

*P8. Recorded by:

Historic Resources Group, LLC
1728 Whitley Avenue
Hollywood, CA 90028

*P9. Date Recorded:

June 2010

*P10. Survey Type: _None

*P11. Report Citation: None

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List):

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name: Self Help Graphics & Art

- B1. **Historic Name:** Brooklyn State Bank
- B2. **Common Name:** Self Help Graphics & Art; Catholic Youth Organization
- B3. **Original Use:** Bank and Retail
- B4. **Present Use:** Community Arts Center
- *B5. **Architectural Style:** Spanish Colonial Revival
- *B6. **Construction History:** 1927, constructed; 1990, mosaic tilework added to exterior walls

- *B7. **Moved?** No Yes Unknown **Date:** **Original Location:**
- *B8. **Related Features:**

- B9a. **Architect:** Postle & Postle
- b. **Builder:** S.C. Clark
- *B10. **Significance: Theme:** Community Landmark
- Area:** Unincorporated East Los Angeles
- Period of Significance:** 1944-1994
- Property Type:** Institutional
- Applicable Criteria:** 1, 2

Summary

The building at 3800 East Cesar Chavez Avenue is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1 as an important community center located in unincorporated East Los Angeles for both its association with Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) in the building between 1944 to 1979, and its association with Self Help Graphics & Art. Self Help Graphics & Art was founded by the late Sister Karen Boccadero in 1970; this building has been its headquarters since 1979. During this period, Self Help Graphics & Art developed into a thriving cultural center for Chicano art and culture, garnering national recognition for nurturing celebrated Chicano artists including Gronk, Patssi Valdez and Frank Romero. The building that Self Help Graphics & Art has called home for thirty years was built in 1927, but too on much of its iconic appearance through its association with the arts center. Its exterior walls are adorned with embedded ceramic pieces, mosaics and murals, an alteration which has assumed associated significance. CYO played a role similar to that of Self Help Graphics, as an important community center articulated through community empowerment, educational programs and social and cultural gatherings. The organization opened in the building in 1944, creating an important community venue to engage Mexican youth, curb violence, and counter systemic racism related to the Zoot Suit Riots in 1943. CYO was also the incubator for the Chicano/East Los Angeles rock and roll sound developed during the 1950s and 1960s that went on to reach national and international recognition. For the reasons described above, the period of significance for the nomination is between 1944 to 1994. It is also eligible under Criterion 2 for its association with community activist Sister Karen Boccadero. (See Continuation Sheet)

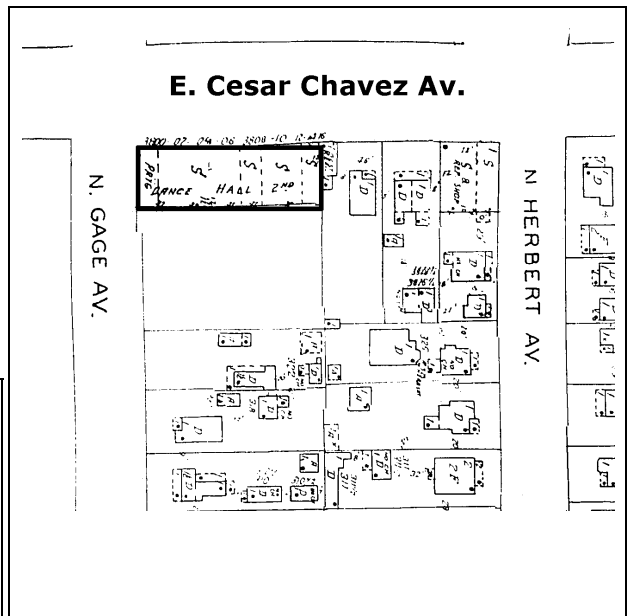
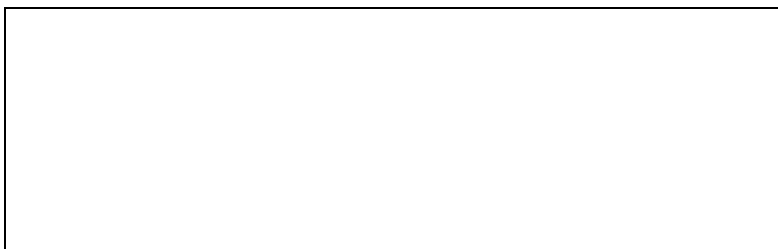
- B11. **Additional Resource Attributes:**
HP13 -- community center/social hall

*B12. **References:** (See Continuation Sheet)

B13. **Remarks:**

*B14. **Evaluator:**
Historic Resources Group, LLC
1728 N. Whitley Avenue
Hollywood, CA 90028

*Date of Evaluation: June 2010



P3a. Description: (continued from page 1)

Designed in a Spanish Colonial Revival style with some Classical Revival elements, the subject building is a two-story rectangular-plan commercial building with two primary facades facing Cesar Chavez Avenue and Gage Avenue. The main (north) facade along Cesar Chavez Avenue consists of eight bays divided into three sections: a slightly projecting off-center bay containing the main entrance (primary bay); five bays serving as commercial storefronts (east wing); and a tower-like bay located at the street intersection (west wing). The low pitch roof of the subject building is a side-gabled, slightly hipped, flat-topped roof on the main bays. The roofs on the projecting bay and corner bay are low pitched pyramidal roofs set at a slightly higher roof-line. All roof portions are covered in rust-colored composition tiles. The subject building is clad in smooth stucco with additional multi-colored tile mosaic laid atop a rough cement finish.

The primary bay contains a prominent arched main entrance. This bay also has a slightly higher roofline than the main roofline of the building and is slightly projected forward from the rest of the main facade for added emphasis. The main entrance consists of a metal double-door framed by side lights and transom set within a decorative double-height arch topped with a keystone. Set within the curvature of the arch on the second floor is a fixed wood frame window with side lights and horizontal louvers in the upper light. Decorative quoins line the corner bays from the roof line to just above the ground floor. Two double-hung wood frame casement windows are located on each side of the arch on the second floor. Below each window on the first floor are enclosed rectangular window openings.

The east wing of the building's main facade consists of five regularly spaced storefronts on the first floor with windows on the second floor. Four of the five storefronts contain single glazed doors with side lights, transoms and display windows. The fourth storefront viewed from the west has been enclosed. The storefront windows and doors have metal security grilles and metal security doors. The last bay is recessed and exhibits a different door and window configuration. This bay serves as the entrance to an interior stairwell and contains a large double-door with an adjacent single-door entrance and a band of transom windows running the length of the bay. A cornice band runs the length of the building's east wing above the storefronts, delineating the first floor from the second floor. Paired double-hung windows are located above each storefront on the second floor, except for the last bay which contains only one centrally placed double-hung wood frame window. Another cornice band runs the length of the east wing directly above the second floor windows and below the roofline.

The west wing of the building's main facade contains two bays with identical door and window configurations on the first floor. Two door entrances with enclosed transom windows are located next to two arched window openings. The window opening adjacent to the primary bay has been enclosed. The arched window nearest the street intersection is a large fixed casement window with a transom set within the curvature of the arch form. The second floor windows are irregularly spaced and are various sized six over one double-hung wood frame windows. There is also a window opening nearest the primary bay featuring an elongated wood frame casement window marking an interior stairwell space. Some of the windows over the storefront openings are double-hung vinyl windows. The corner of the building projects above the roofline creating a tower element. The roofline of the tower rises to the same height of the primary bay's roofline and shares a similar roof shape. Seismic metal anchor plates are visible near the main façade's midline and at roof level.

The building's west facade facing Gage Avenue features two bays. An identical arched fixed casement window as on the primary (north) facade is found on the tower bay. A door and window opening on the ground floor appear to have been enclosed. The second floor windows have a regular spacing of double-hung wood frame windows with a cornice band running the length of the west facade. Seismic metal anchor plates are visible near the main façade's midline and at roof level.

The south facade facing the surface parking area is a secondary façade. It consists of painted brick cladding bisected by an attached metal stairway leading to a second-floor entrance. The east end of this façade is covered with the same multi-colored tile mosaic as on the primary facades. The first floor has an irregular spacing of window openings, enclosed window openings, and two entrances with metal doors. The second floor has regularly spaced double-hung vinyl windows with "eyebrow" brick arches above each opening. Two windows have been covered with expanded metal grilles. Two metal doors, previously window openings, are located on the second floor and lead to the outdoor metal stairway. Seismic metal anchor plates are visible at the midline and roof level. A shrine consisting of a statue of the Virgin de Guadalupe with minimal landscaping and tile work is located at the southeastern corner of the parcel's surface parking area.

The east facade first floor of the building is obscured by an attached single-story commercial building located on an adjacent lot. The exposed second floor portion of the facade features a painted mural that runs the length of the building, entitled "Homenaje a Siqueiros."

Interior, First Floor

The first floor interiors of the building consist of five storefront spaces, a primary commercial space, and two stairwells leading to the second floor. Beginning with the corner storefront space at the intersection of Cesar Chavez Avenue and Gage Avenue, the interior is a utilitarian commercial space accentuated by arched window openings, one of which has been enclosed. Between this enclosed arched window and the primary bay of the building is a slightly recessed wood double-door entrance with glazed transoms and tile sign reading "3802." This entrance, which has functioned as the main entrance for the building and its offices, leads to a main stairwell. The stairwell has wood treads and risers, and is configured with a quarter-pace landing and a half-pace landing. From this landing to the second floor is a decorative wooden handrail consisting of box newels and turned balusters. An elongated casement window in the north wall is located at the half-pace landing. Another wooden railing with identical detailing is wall-mounted at the second floor level.

The main entrance of the building contains two sets of identical double-doors leading to an open commercial space with a slightly higher ceiling height than other interior spaces. The three identical storefronts adjacent to the main bay contain commercial spaces with various interior configurations. Interior spaces are of a utilitarian design, consisting of concrete flooring and exposed ceilings.

The secondary stairwell is located at the east end of the building. It is accessed through the doors of the east storefront. The vestibule is two stories in height and leads to the stairwell with a rectangular glazed sky light. The enclosed staircase has painted wood treads and risers running its full length from wall to wall. The steps are interrupted by a landing midway up the ascent. There is a floor mounted metal pipe handrail located on the steps in the center the stairwell.

Interior, Second Floor

The interior of the second floor of the building consists primarily of a large open space serving as a multi-purpose room. At the eastern portion of the room is a fixed stage consisting of a projecting oval-shaped wooden platform elevated a few feet from the floor with paired steps flanking each side. A rectangular proscenium leads to a slightly recessed space. The stage is flanked by a single door leading to a backstage area and a double door that leads directly to the top landing of the secondary stairwell and a small storage room. The multi-purpose room measures 62'-4" x 47'-6" and encompasses three evenly spaced pairings of windows on the north and south walls. Sheathed in smooth plaster, the ceiling is slightly hipped at the ceiling and wall juncture and has a simple cornice molding. Four rectangular concrete beams run the width of the ceiling, terminating at projecting concrete structural columns between the window pairings. The columns, combined with the cornice molding, create a simple pilaster-style wall treatment. The walls are finished with smooth painted plaster. There is a painted wood chair rail at the window sill level. The original wood strip flooring and baseboards have been painted.

The south end of the west wall of the multi-purpose room is a temporary painted smooth gypsum three-quarter height partition with double wood doors. Behind the partition are two elliptical arched openings, and one small rounded arched opening, with simple rectangular columns with boxed capitals. These openings lead to a room with a long counter and a doorway at the southeast corner that leads to a kitchen area. The north end of the west wall of the multi-purpose space is a small room, now enclosed, featuring similar elliptical arches. There is a hallway that runs from the multi-purpose room at the center of the building to the office spaces at the west end of the building.

Moving east to west along the hallway, there are doors leading to various office spaces and a bathroom. At a point where the hallway narrows there is a corner niche similar in design to the other arched openings. Doorways have painted wood frames and wall treatments are smooth painted plaster. One office space facing Cesar Chavez Avenue contains the prominent large arched window visible on the main bay of the primary north facade. The hallway terminates at the landing for the main stairwell leading down to the first floor. All office spaces in this western portion of the building are utilitarian in design and feature simple wood trim molding over windows and doors. The wall treatment consists of a simple wainscot with painted vertical wood boards; doors are painted wood; and the floors consist of painted wood strip and vinyl sheet flooring.

Exterior, Mosaic Art Piece

Located on the exterior surface of the north, south and east facades of the building is a public art installation consisting of a variety of ceramic pieces affixed to the smooth exterior walls. The ceramic pieces have been embedded into applied cement with a rough texture. The pieces consist of vintage and irregularly broken, brightly colored ceramic recycled from household items, such as dishes, bowls, cups, pots, saucers, and ceramic statuettes. Many pieces have been applied flush against the wall. In some cases, particularly on the south facade of the building, the pieces jut out significantly from the building exterior; these include ceramic statuettes consisting of cat heads, duck heads, and entire intact pieces of plates. Although consisting of a multitude of colors, the predominant color, particularly in the south facade, appears to be varying shades of blue.

The mosaic art piece covers the entire east wing of the primary (north) facade with the storefront openings from the first floor to roofline. At the primary bay and west wing of the primary (north) facade, the mosaic art piece covers only the first floor level. The enclosed storefront and window openings contain individual mosaic art pieces within their borders consisting of a more tightly compact use of ceramic pieces forming specific imagery. These consist of birds in flight, sunsets, and landscapes. On the building's west facade facing Gage Avenue, the mosaic art piece covers only the first floor level. The eastern portion of the secondary south facade is nearly completely covered in the mosaic art piece from the first floor to roofline, including the inset window sills. The western portion of the secondary south facade has mosaic at the first floor which then begins to rise as it moves easterly, following the upward slope of the exterior metal staircase. About seventy-five percent of the secondary south facade is covered with mosaic, leaving a second floor section, at the west end, with the original exposed painted brick.

The mosaic is the work of Eduardo Oropeza (1947-2003), a Mexican American artist born in San Jose, California who resided primarily in East Los Angeles. Raised as a field worker in a migrant family, Oropeza began his academic career in Social Studies, but soon changed his major after taking an art class. He obtained a Masters degree in Fine Arts in sculpture from San Jose State University and continued with post-graduate work at San Diego State University and Palomar College. Although trained as a sculptor, Oropeza's body of work included painting, photography, and prints. Four works by Oropeza are in the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

In the late 1980s, Sister Karen Bocalero offered Oropeza a space inside Self Help Graphics & Art to work on his photography. It was during this time that Oropeza offered to single-handedly create a public art piece for the organization by adding colorful ceramic mosaic pieces to the exterior. Oropeza worked alone for nearly three years before completing his work in 1990. This work, which was never titled by the artist, remains Oropeza's largest and most prominent art installation. The second phase of this project was the creation of the Virgin of Guadalupe shrine in the southeast corner of parking lot. Oropeza died on September 11, 2003 in East Los Angeles.

B10. Significance: (continued from page 2)

Building Development Chronology

The colorfully tiled two-story building located at 3800 East Cesar Chavez Avenue (formerly Brooklyn Avenue) in East Los Angeles was completed on June 25, 1927 to house the Brooklyn State Bank, it is currently the home of Self Help Graphics & Art. Designed by local architectural firm Postle & Postle, the building was to have four stores, a market and banking rooms on the ground floor, and a banquet hall, lodge room, offices and apartments on the second floor. S.C. Clark was the general contractor.¹ It appears the Brooklyn State Bank never occupied the building, as there is no record of it ever doing business at this location; either the bank never received its charter or it failed.

There is limited information about the occupants of the building during its first decades. A City Directory search revealed that the building was occupied by several different commercial tenants beginning in 1929 through 1942, as listed below:²

Year	Address	Tenant	Business	Notes
1929	3800 Brooklyn Ave	Ernest A. Josselyn	real estate	
1929	3806 Brooklyn Ave	Lawrence La Paglia	barber	
1936	3800 Brooklyn Ave	Henry Crollett	funeral director	
1936	3806 Brooklyn Ave	Civic & Progressive Association		
1936	3806 Brooklyn Ave	Ernest A. Josselyn	real estate	
1936	3808 Brooklyn Ave	Grace Ramirez	beauty shop	
1936	3810 Brooklyn Ave	Alberto Haro wholesale	confectionary	
1938	3800 Brooklyn Ave	Henry Crollett	funeral director	
1938	3806 Brooklyn Ave	Ernest A. Josselyn	real estate	
1938	3808 Brooklyn Ave	Lupe Aguerrebere	beauty shop	
1938	3810 Brooklyn Ave	Alberto Haro wholesale	confectionary	
1938	3814 Brooklyn Ave	Ygnacio Noriega	shoe repair	
1939	3800 Brooklyn Ave	Commercial Institute		G.M. Dominguez, manager
1939	3806 Brooklyn Ave	Ernest J. Hinckly	restaurant	
1939	3812 Brooklyn Ave	Cesario Catellanos	fruits	
1939	3814 Brooklyn Ave	Ygnacio Noriega	shoe repair	
1942	3804 Brooklyn Ave	Mrs. Ybarra Tomasa	restaurant	
1942	3806 Brooklyn Ave	Rick Centoni	sculptor, plaster figures	
1942	3808 Brooklyn Ave	Ygnacio Noriega	shoe repair	

In addition to retail functions, the building was ideal for community-related uses because of its many large rooms and its prominent location on the corner of a major thoroughfare. It became a distinctive activity center that reflected the character and uniqueness of East Los Angeles and its rich ethnic heritage.

In 1944, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles purchased the building for use by the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO).³ Under the auspices of Catholic Charities, CYO is responsible for coordinating interscholastic athletics for the elementary schools of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. “Throughout its history, thousands of youth, who might not otherwise have had access to organized sports, built confidence and learned the values of discipline, goal setting and inner strength. Playing sports through CYO changes

¹ *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1927.

² Los Angeles City Directories: 1929, 1936, 1938, 1939, 1942.

³ The Archdiocese continued to own the building until it was sold in 2008 to a private enterprise.

the course of many lives and creates healthier communities.”⁴ CYO’s occupancy initiated the building’s historical function as a center for social and community-related uses, prompting its recognition as an important community landmark in East Los Angeles.⁵ This functioned as a source of community empowerment and continued on when SHG&A moved into the building in 1979.

In the 1950s and 1960s, CYO held dances in the building featuring music by local East Los Angeles bands. Concerts and dances held at East Los Angeles College and El Monte Legion Stadium, youth centers and union halls, and at popular nightclubs like the Rhythm Room in Fullerton and the Rainbow Gardens in Pomona showcased local Chicano musicians who learned to blend Mexican and rock music into a synthesis that won them admirers both inside and outside the barrio. “The CYO was *the* place to go to hear the many groups that were riding the crest of the then-burgeoning East L.A. sound,”⁶ among them pioneering garage bands Thee Midneters, The Jaguars, The Salas Brothers, The Romancers, The Premiers, and Cannibal & The Headhunters. Many had regional and national hits that combined the barrio’s dialogue with mainstream rock & roll music. Gradually, the “East Los Angeles Sound” faded and many venues closed their doors. It would be twenty years until live music was again booked into the building under the auspices of Self Help Graphics & Art.

The CYO left the building in the early 1970s; Self Help Graphics & Art took occupancy in the late 1970s. In the intervening years, the Archdiocese may have given favor to other religious groups. In 1973, La Libreria San Pablo, a Spanish language bookshop, was opened by the Pious Society of St. Paul, a religious congregation in the Archdiocese.⁷

Self Help Graphics & Art moved into the building in 1979, and for the past thirty years they have used the space to foster local artistic talent by encouraging aspiring artists to create work in an affirming environment. The building contains a gallery, a printing room, office space, studio space for artists-in-residence, and storage areas. To this day, SHG&A is a place where people congregate and interact with one another and reflects, in part, the residents’ religious and cultural background, and social and economic status. The building’s contribution to the East Los Angeles community is matched by the importance placed on it by residents, whose loyal patronage over the years has secured its status as a community landmark.⁸

Postle & Postle, architects

Postle & Postle was the partnership of David E. Postle and his son David E. Postle, Jr. David E. Postle, Sr. (1863-1939) began his career in Chicago after graduating with a degree in architecture and engineering from the University of Illinois. He moved west to Los Angeles in the early 1920s and purchased a house in the Windsor Square area of Los Angeles in 1921.⁹ Both of his sons, George R. Postle and David E. Postle Jr., were also architects who graduated from the University of Illinois. They were all members of the Alpha Rho Chi fraternity for students of architecture and were active in the Los Angeles alumni chapter. When Postle, Sr. came to Los Angeles he formed the Postle Engineering Company, which became The Postle Company, and eventually Postle & Postle. After David E. Postle died in 1939, his son George R. Postle continued to lead the firm into the 1940s.

Postle, Sr. spent his early career in Illinois. In the 1890s, he partnered with fellow architect Gilbert M. Trumbull. They designed several noteworthy buildings in Elgin, Illinois, including Queen Anne style homes for several prominent local citizens. Townsend Flats was built in 1893 as rental housing in response to Elgin’s nineteenth century industrial boom. In 1898, Postle designed the Lord’s Park Pavilion, the focal point for Lord’s Park. The park was a gift from George P. Lord, a business manager for the Elgin National Watch Company who also served as mayor of Elgin. It is one of the city’s most visible landmarks and is designated a local Elgin landmark.¹⁰ In 1901, Postle designed a Classical Revival complex to house David C. Cook’s growing religious publication business in Elgin. It had a prominent central building distinguished by a large portico and two sprawling wings that housed the company’s nearly 300 employees. He also designed his own residence in 1903—a two-story Prairie School style duplex. In 1904, he was commissioned to design a building to house the natural history collection belonging to the Lord family.

⁴ <http://www.catholiccharitiesla.org/what-we-do/empowering-children-a-teens/catholic-youth-organization.html>. (Accessed 10-13-09).

⁵ In addition to CYO, La Casa del Mexicano moved into the building in 1945 for use as a community center into the late 1940s. La Casa del Mexicano was “conceived by the then Consul General for Mexico with a view to improving the lot of and guiding local teenage youngsters of Spanish and Mexican ancestry.” *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 1948.

⁶ Stuart Goldman, “New Wave Rides High on a Latin Beat,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1980.

⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 1973.

⁸ Community landmarks serve as points of reference and identification. They are community oriented and oftentimes perform an important function or provide a local service. A landmark can be physically prominent, historically significant or of social, religious and cultural value.

⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, July 24, 1921.

¹⁰ <http://www.cityofelgin.org/index.aspx?NID=334>. (Accessed 9-20-09).

The Neo-Classical style Lord Memorial Museum was almost completed in 1906 when Mr. Lord died. After languishing for many years, it finally opened in 1920 as the Elgin Audobon Museum, and has since been designated a local Elgin landmark.¹¹

In Chicago, Postle, Sr. partnered with his brother Oliver H. Postle. They had professional offices in the Marquette Building on Dearborn Street in 1900.¹² While in Chicago, Postle, Sr. designed the Pattington Apartments (1902), the first luxury suburban apartment complex of the open-court type construction on the north side of city in the Buena Park neighborhood. The four-story structure (listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980) was an early precedent for what became an extremely popular Chicago building type.¹³ Many of Postle's buildings from this period have gained National Register or local landmark status.¹⁴

Postle, Sr. continued his successful architectural career after his move to Los Angeles in the early 1920s. He developed a thriving design and contracting firm that worked to meet the demand for luxury housing amongst Southern California's elite residents and wealthy visitors. He designed several single-family homes, but increasingly turned his focus to multi-family apartment buildings. He was skillful at interpreting the popular Revival styles of the day with virtuosity, such as Spanish Colonial Revival, Chateausque, Beaux Arts, Tudor Revival, Mission Revival and Regency.

Much of Postle's early work in Southern California is located in Pasadena: the Spanish Colonial Revival style Euclid Court (1921); the Mediterranean style Roseleigh Court (1922);¹⁵ the Tudor Revival style El Roble (1922), a Gothic style church in South Pasadena for the Christian Scientists; the Mediterranean style Gunther House (1923) in Altadena; the Neo-Classical style eight-story Pasco apartment building (1923) on Colorado at Los Robles; and alterations to the Castle Green (1924). He also worked as building contractor for Theodore Eisen on the Casa de Adobe (1917) and for Elmer Gray on the Pasadena Playhouse (1925).¹⁶

From 1925 through 1929 Postle & Postle designed revival style multi-story and height-limit apartment buildings in Los Angeles County for several different developers, including:¹⁷

Building Year		Location	Developer	Notes
Carondelet Hotel	1925	Seventh & Wilshire	Arthur C. Vaughn	Height-limit, 265-rooms, 4 stories, reinforced concrete and steel
Vermont Apartment-Hotel	1925	Vermont & Santa Monica	Arthur C. Vaughn	4 stories
Seventh Street Apartments	1925	Seventh & New Hampshire	Arthur C. Vaughn	Height-limit, 200 apartments
Hollywood Apartments	1925	Vine & Yucca	Clarendon Apt Co.	Height-limit, 162 apartments, private dining room, stores at street level, basement w/garage, , "Own Your Own" apartment building, luxury, Italianate
Santa Monica Beach Club	1926	Palisades at Santa Monica Blvd		Ocean-front site, French chateau style, steel frame and brick, height limit
Store Building	1926	Acacia Street in Hawthorne	Interstate Mortgage and Investment Co./ Hollywood, L.A. Zeigler Co.	2 stories
Mariposa Apartments	1927		J.A. Faucher	5-story plus basement, 39 apartment suites, French Renaissance style, reinforced concrete and steel, finished with pressed brick and cast stone and slate roof

¹¹ <http://www.cityofelgin.org/index.aspx?NID=334>. (Accessed 9-20-09).

¹² "Directory of Architects," *The House Beautiful*, Vol. VII, No. 6, May 1900.

¹³ "Buena Park Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form, March 23, 1984.

¹⁴ There are four National Register Districts in Elgin, IL. As of this writing, David E. Postle's work is recognized in at least two of those districts. <http://www.cityofelgin.org/index.aspx?NID=336>. (Accessed 9-20-09).

¹⁵ These two bungalow courts are included in the nomination form for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Bungalow Courts of Pasadena Thematic Resources, July 1983.

¹⁶ Nomination of "El Roble," 141 North Grand Avenue, for Designation as Landmark, City of Pasadena, November 1, 2004.

¹⁷ These properties were found through a search of the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database for the *Los Angeles Times* (1881-1986).

Building Year		Location	Developer	Notes
Pasadena Apartments	1927	Fair Oaks/Raymond & Dayton	Hotel Green Syndicate	Two height-limit apartment buildings, near Castle Green, 100 apartments each, connected with a row of low arcades on Raymond Avenue and connects to Castle Green
Hollywood Apartments	1927	Virginia Avenue	Interstate Mortgage and Investment Co./ Hollywood, L.A. Zeigler Co.	5 stories, brick
Bank Building	1927	First & Spring	Equitable Branch of Security Trust and Savings Bank	2-story plus basement, modern reinforced concrete w/stone facing, 40 office suites, parking in basement, nine store fronts and bank space
Apartment Building	1927	Beverly & Western	Dalton Investment Co.	7-story, apartment-hotel, luxury, two elevators, refrigeration, radio equipment, nine store fronts, 30 suites, Spanish Renaissance style
<i>Belvedere Bank Block</i>	<i>1927</i>	<i>Brooklyn & Gage</i>	<i>Interstate Mortgage and Investment Co./ Hollywood, L.A. Zeigler Co.</i>	<i>2 story commercial building</i>
English Rooms	1928	Penthouse in department store at Hollywood & Vine		BH Dyas Department Store Source: <i>Architectural Digest</i>
Trianon Apartments	1929		Findlay Realty Co.	7-story, two basement floors for parking, Italian Renaissance style

East Los Angeles as a Mexican American Community

East Los Angeles is a unique environment, not just within the context of the Southern California region, but as a fulcrum for growth, change, challenges and opportunities. Although East Los Angeles is in unincorporated Los Angeles County, its history and demographics are a reflection of the multi-cultural growth patterns of the City of Los Angeles. From its modern founding in the late 1880s to the present, East Los Angeles has been home to waves of immigration, and many different ethnic and cultural groups have at one time or another settled, lived, and moved through East Los Angeles.¹⁸

Throughout the nineteenth century, ranchos occupied large parts of what is now East Los Angeles. The dominant population in Los Angeles was Mexican American until the expansion of the railroads into the southland brought many European immigrants to the Pacific Coast. By 1890, the once dominant native-born Spanish-speaking community comprised only ten percent of the area’s total population. The professional or middle-class *Californio* families (Californians of Hispanic decent) had gained acceptance into mainstream society by claiming Spanish heritage, but those of Mexican descent were segregated in downtown Los Angeles barrios such as Sonoratown and the adjacent Plaza district. They were soon joined by Mexican refugees fleeing the Mexican Revolution.

The 1910 Mexican Revolution spurred the growth of the Mexican population in the United States and in Los Angeles. Refugees crossed the border seeking jobs and a place to relocate until the civil strife subsided in Mexico. With its exploding economic growth and development, Los Angeles was a popular final destination among new Mexican immigrants. Its proximity to the border and familiar cultural environment also enhanced its appeal. Southern California represented a fertile agricultural region and burgeoning urban and industrial center. The rapid growth of agribusiness necessitated the recruitment of farm workers. There were also employment opportunities on the railroads and in local industries such as canning, garment, and gas works. These jobs proved appealing to many unskilled and semi-skilled immigrants from Mexico.

Many of the new Mexican immigrants settled in Sonoratown in downtown Los Angeles because barrios were already established with a Mexican cultural core, and they provided affordable housing that was near available employment opportunities. Both recent immigrants and more established Mexican Americans experienced racial discrimination, cultural derision, inferior

¹⁸ <http://www.pbs.org/americanfamily/eastla.html>. (Accessed 12-22-09).

educational opportunities, and economic hardship. Local anti-Mexican sentiment incited a campaign to restrict Mexican immigration, which succeeded at marginalizing and alienating the Mexican population. It also created a unity between the new immigrants and Mexican Americans; both spoke Spanish as their primary language and identified with their Catholic faith, customs and cultural celebrations that solidified the integrity of family life.

The massive influx of Mexican immigrants into downtown Los Angeles impacted traditional residential life as the barrios became overcrowded. Moreover, as industrial growth increased property values in downtown Los Angeles, much of the Mexican American population was displaced from Sonoratown. This marked the first exodus out of downtown as new arrivals were forced to settle elsewhere. Lured by employment opportunities and inexpensive housing, many moved east across the Los Angeles River, creating one of the largest Mexican communities in the Los Angeles region.

By the 1920s, East Los Angeles had a population of over 30,000 residents of Mexican descent. Mexican communities east of the river emerged in Boyle Heights, Lincoln Heights, Maravilla, Belvedere, and City Terrace. During this time, East Los Angeles also became a popular destination for other recent immigrants. Boyle Heights, in particular, included distinctive settlements of Jews, Russians, and Armenians, later joined by Japanese and African Americans. Living east of the river, Mexican workers in the early twentieth century traveled by foot or by electric rail to factories in downtown Los Angeles and surrounding agricultural fields, where their labor helped fuel the rapid growth of Los Angeles.¹⁹

Most Mexicans who fled the Revolution in the 1920s intended to return, however many were enticed to stay. The prosperity and opportunity they found in Southern California, gave rise to the Mexican and Mexican American community in East Los Angeles. Often confined to low-status employment with low wages, they remained common laborers and could not substantially improve their standard of living. A strong sense of family flourished and resulted in a proliferation of churches and schools, social and political societies and clubs, fiestas and other public cultural celebrations, as well as the emergence of Spanish-language newspapers.

Even as Mexicans became more established, discrimination increased and impeded their struggle for equal treatment. Mexicans, either U.S. born or immigrant, were frequently used as scapegoats for an unstable economy and were perceived as competing with white Americans for resources and jobs. During the Great Depression, the federal government launched a national repatriation campaign to deport Mexican nationals living in the United States. This led to a countywide policy of forced repatriation of thousands of Mexicans, many of whom were U.S. citizens. Anti-Mexican sentiment became a de facto condition for Mexicans living in Los Angeles.

During World War II, a new wave of racial tension in Los Angeles erupted into the Zoot Suit Riots of 1943, an episode in which mobs of white servicemen and civilians, with local police backing, assaulted Mexican neighborhoods in the Eastside barrios. Despite facing rampant xenophobia, Mexican American youth from East Los Angeles served in all branches of the armed forces and became one of the most highly decorated ethnic groups of the war. World War II was also a period of expanded employment opportunities for Mexican American workers.

The postwar era saw residents of East Los Angeles challenging racial barriers through new community organizations and greater involvement in the political process. CYO, opening in 1944 on the heels of the Zoot Suit Riots, created an important community venue to engage Mexican youth. The founding of the Community Service Organization (CSO), located in Boyle Heights, and the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA), as well as the 1949 election of Edward R. Roybal to the Los Angeles City Council (the first Mexican American council member of the twentieth century) also resulted from this new wave of activism. This political shift coincided with demographic growth, increased educational levels, and improved housing in East Los Angeles.

The civil rights movement of the 1960s marked the emergence of activism led by Mexican American youth in East Los Angeles. "Chicano" replaced the term "Mexican American" as a symbol of self-determination and cultural pride. This consciousness spawned organized activities that became widely known as the Chicano movement, much of which originated in East Los Angeles.²⁰ Through it all emerged a new sense of cultural identity. Artists and writers helped to promote the call to the reborn Mexican American and heralded a new day in the barrio.

¹⁹ "East Los Angeles - Community Service Organization, Mexican American Political Association, Los Angeles Times, California State University, Los Angeles," <http://www.jrank.org/cultures/pages/3830/East-Los-Angeles.html>. (Accessed 12-22-09).

²⁰ "East Los Angeles," <http://www.jrank.org/cultures/pages/3830/East-Los-Angeles.html> (Accessed 12-22-09).

Self Help Graphics & Art: A Center for Chicano Expression

Self Help Graphics & Art (SHG&A), an artists' cooperative, was formed in 1970 by Franciscan nun Sister Karen Bocalero and Chicano artists Carlos Bueno and Antonio Ibanez. In the beginning, they worked out of a garage in Boyle Heights.²¹ SHG&A's first exhibition opened in 1971 at El Mercado, an East Los Angeles shopping complex, and featured works by Sister Karen and Antonio Ibanez. In 1972, after receiving a \$10,000 donation from the Sisters of St. Francis, SHG&A established an office on the third floor of a building at 2111 Brooklyn Avenue (renamed Cesar Chavez Avenue) in Boyle Heights.

The beginning of SHG&A and its growth as an institution were rooted in the movement for self-empowerment amongst local Chicano students and activists. "Sister Karen developed Self Help Graphics into a year around program to help Chicanos rediscover their cultural heritage."²² Her reasons for starting SHG&A were: to provide training and studio space for local artists who worked in printmaking; to offer the surrounding community, including families and children, cultural experiences to instill a sense of cultural pride; and to teach local elementary school students about the value of art in their communities. She believed in the power of art to transform the local community.²³

The connection to the Catholic Church proved fortuitous in SHG&A's early development. Sister Karen used the convent's address for business transactions, helping to secure additional funding. "During the first two years of its existence, Self Help used an eclectic mix of donations, gifts and in-kind services to maintain the space. Sister Karen, a tireless fundraiser, asked art supply companies for discounts, Beverly Hills art enthusiasts for donations, and a local museum for Huichol art to exhibit in elementary school classes."²⁴ A batik and silkscreen workshop that culminated in a group exhibition was among the first services offered at SHG&A's original location. Participating artists paid a small fee and brought their own materials, and funds provided by the California Arts Council allowed the hiring of artists (including Michael Amescua and Linda Vallejo) as instructors.

For two years, Sister Karen worked to secure a permanent space for SHG&A. After convincing members of her Order of its value to the Mexican American community, she organized a letter-writing campaign to urge the Archdiocese to provide a home for the fledgling organization. In particular, Sister Karen had her eye on the building at Gage and Brooklyn Avenues (now Cesar Chavez Avenue): "The building had been used previously by the Catholic Youth Organization and rented to various private and public enterprises, such as a dance hall and a legal defense group. It was much larger than the third-floor studio that Self Help had occupied." SHG&A took occupancy in 1979, paying "one dollar a year to lease the building, renewable every ten years."²⁵

Sister Karen Bocalero (1933-1997)

Sister Karen was born Carmen Rose Bocalero on May 17, 1933 in Globe, Arizona, a small mining town, to Italian parents. After her parents separated when she was five, Carmen was brought up by her mother, who worked as a buttonhole-maker in a Los Angeles garment factory. They lived just east of the downtown Los Angeles garment factories across the Los Angeles River in Boyle Heights.

Moving frequently, Carmen sought stability in religion. Although her family was not formally religious, she decided to become a practicing Catholic and entered a Franciscan convent, Order of the Sisters of St. Francis, at age 18. She emerged as Sister Karen. The Order emphasized individual contributions to society, and the convent prepared her to become an elementary school teacher even though her passion was in creating art. She taught elementary school in the Los Angeles area from 1955-1965.

Sister Karen's interest in art began with crayons and watercolors in elementary school and continued with her taking several art classes in high school. While in the convent, her interest in art led her to study at the Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, a private, Catholic college established in 1916 by the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Sister Karen graduated with a bachelor's degree in art in 1965.

²¹ There is conflicting information about the exact location. It is either the corner of Soto and Brooklyn Avenues or Eastern and Gage.

²² "Sister Karen Bocalero," *Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 1978.

²³ Kristen Guzman, "Art in the Heart of East Los Angeles," in *Self Help Graphics & Art: Art in the Heart of East Los Angeles*, ed. Colin Gunckel. Chicano Archives Series No. 1 (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2005), p. 6.

²⁴ Guzman, p. 9.

²⁵ Guzman, p. 10.

Sister Karen's time at Immaculate Heart College was directed by Sister Mary Corita Kent (1918-1986), who she considered "one of the most inspiring women in the world."²⁶ Sister Corita taught art and chaired the college's art department from 1938 until 1968, when she left the Order and relocated to Boston.²⁷ She worked almost exclusively with silkscreen and serigraphy, helping to establish it as a fine art medium. Her artwork, with its messages of love and peace, was particularly popular during the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s. Sister Corita gained international fame for her vibrant serigraphs. She created several hundred serigraph designs for posters, book covers, and murals. Sister Corita died of cancer in 1986. Sister Karen learned to pull prints under Sister Corita's instruction.

From 1965-1970, Sister Karen pursued her arts education in Rome, Italy through Temple University's Tyler School of Art, based in Philadelphia. She taught art in Rome and Philadelphia during her studies. During this time, she was exposed to the atelier setting, a method of instruction modeled after the private art studio schools of 15th-19th century Europe, where an artist works closely with a small number of students to progressively train them. Upon her return to the United States, Sister Karen received her Masters of Fine Arts in printmaking in 1971. She returned to Los Angeles in 1972 and taught batik at the Immaculate Heart College, then printmaking at Los Angeles City College in 1974-1975.

Sister Karen began producing her own art out of a garage in Boyle Heights in 1970, but was soon working to promote community arts and the work of local artists. That same year she helped to establish SHG&A. "I had no clear idea of what I was getting into. I imagined it would be nice to have a place where artists in the barrio could come in and work."²⁸ There was a constant struggle for funding to keep the center running. She attended grant writing workshops sponsored by the City of Los Angeles, and successfully pursued major funding sources, including an early grant from the National Endowment for the Arts that allowed SHG&A to hire its first professional administrative staff. Sister Karen served as SHG&A's executive director, tireless promoter, and chief fundraiser until her death in 1997.

Politics and Art/Community Involvement

The Chicano Movement exploded in the 1960s as an extension of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement of the 1940s, aiming to achieve social liberation and Mexican American empowerment. The Chicano Movement encompassed a broad cross section of issues—from restoration of land grants, to farm workers' rights, to quality education, to voting and political rights, combined with an emerging awareness of a collective history. Socially, the Chicano Movement addressed what it perceived to be systemic oppression of Mexican American communities and negative ethnic stereotypes of Mexicans in mass media and the American consciousness.²⁹

A major element of the Chicano Movement was the burgeoning Chicano art scene. Fueled by heightened political activism and energized cultural pride, Chicano visual art, music, literature, dance, theater and other forms of expression flourished. Chicano self-expression developed into a full-scale arts movement, encompassing painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, literature, and theater. Chicano, Mexican American, and Hispanic cultural centers, theaters, film festivals, museums, galleries, and numerous other arts and cultural organizations soon followed.

SHG&A emerged within this milieu, helping to nurture Chicano cultural identity and political empowerment. "Chicano art became an integral part of a political movement founded on the idea of cultural affirmation and pride in indigenous roots. ... The impetus to create art centers like Self Help Graphics arose in the context of this linkage between cultural identity and political

²⁶ "Sister Karen Boccasero," *Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 1978.

²⁷ Sister Corita left the church just prior to the directives of Vatican II, which prompted many in the Order to renounce their vows. In the late 1960s, the Sisters followed the guidance of Pope Paul VI and conducted a review of their structure and proposed changes to how they prayed, worked, lived together and governed themselves. However, the local archbishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, James Francis Cardinal McIntyre, was opposed to all the proposed changes, leading to a public dispute where he ordered the removal of all Immaculate Heart Sisters teaching in the Los Angeles diocesan schools, and finally presented the Community with an ultimatum: either conform with his wishes or seek dispensation from vows. *Time Magazine*, February 16, 1970.

²⁸ "Sister Karen Boccasero," *Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 1978.

²⁹ <http://www.lulac.org/about/history/>. (Accessed 1-7-2010).

empowerment.”³⁰ Indeed, the many shifts in cultural and ethnic composition, economic hardship, and urban restructuring in East Los Angeles created an invaluable source of artistic and political expression.

“Many artists and long-time staff members of Self Help affirm that the organization’s work was indeed political and sought to expand the boundaries of what it means to engage in Chicano politics. Self Help reflected political and social convictions that paralleled ideas from the Chicano movement, while also providing a space for artists of all ethnicities who embraced Chicano culture and politics.”³¹ Many artists affiliated with SHG&A were active in community politics, including Harry Gamboa, Jr., Patssi Valdez, and Moctesuma Esparza, and participated in civil movements such as the East Los Angeles Walkouts, a series of protests against the Los Angeles Unified School District for its unequal allocation of resources to schools in working class communities and communities of color.

While fostering the talent of local Chicano youth, SHG&A actively promoted the recognition of Chicano art in mainstream art circles. Artists exhibited their work in the Galeria Otra Vez, an “in-house gallery where [artists] might occasionally earn a small sum for selling some of their pieces... [and] made it possible for Chicano artists to have creative control over the production and exhibition of their work.”³² SHG&A was important in establishing Chicano artists who later went on to critical acclaim such as Gronk, Patssi Valdez, Frank Romero and Carlos Almaraz, to name a very few. Works created by these artists through their association with SHG&A have since become integral to the artistic identity of East Los Angeles.

Printmaking as a Mexican Tradition

Although Sister Karen’s interest in printmaking influenced the work being produced at SHG&A, there was already a strong tradition of printmaking in the Mexican culture that emerged from the spirit of reform after the Mexican Revolution in the 1920s, combined with a renewed appreciation for the art and culture of the indigenous people of Mexico. “As Mexican artists embraced the graphic arts, they helped define a post-Revolution Mexican identity. Printmaking in Mexico changed the notion of what public art is, and posters and prints emerged as the ideal means for disseminating political and social as well as artistic ideas. This was an art of the people for the people.”³³

The lithograph was introduced in Mexico by Italian artists in 1826. Mexican native Jose Guadalupe Posada (1852-1913) is considered the first significant Mexican printmaker and founder of the modern Mexican art movement. At age sixteen he became an apprentice to a printer and publisher, where he learned printmaking with a focus on lithography and engraving on wood and metal. The shop also served as a meeting place for the community to discuss political and social issues. His early work focused on illustrations for newspapers, magazines, books, and commercial items. Posada moved to Mexico City in 1888 and collaborated with publisher Antonio Vanegas Arroyo to produce *hojas volantes* (flying leaves), or broadsheets, that were distributed on city streets. These one-sheets covered a whole host of topics, ranging from moral stories to high-society gossip to illustrated songs. Posada is best known for his engraved illustrations of *calaveras* (animated skeletons) set in political satire. His use of skeletons as a metaphor for a corrupt society marks Posada as a pioneer expressionist. These illustrations are considered Posada’s greatest contribution to Mexican culture. Although Posada worked mostly in obscurity during his lifetime, his work raised awareness among those who sought to remedy injustice and abuses under the then dictatorship in Mexico. Dismissed by the academic art society and out of political favor, Posada died poor and virtually unknown in 1913.

French artist and art historian Jean Charlot (1898-1979) rediscovered Posada in 1921 while working as a muralist in Mexico City. Part of the European vanguard, Charlot was drawn to the universal scope of Posada’s prints and posthumously dubbed him the “printmaker to the Mexican people.” He widely publicized and reprinted Posada’s work as the ideal counterpart for the revolutionary spirit of the time, and proved instrumental in bringing international awareness to the importance of Posada and his place in history. Charlot himself made significant contributions to the Mexican printmaking tradition, introducing his series of woodcuts titled “Via Crucis” to the students at the Coyoacan Open-Air Painting School. The students eagerly adopted this technique, prizing its immediacy and expressiveness over the relatively confined parameters of traditional printmaking.

³⁰ Guzman, p. 3.

³¹ Guzman, p. 18. The Chicano arts movement was part of the much larger Chicano Civil Rights Movement which sought Mexican American empowerment throughout the culture.

³² Guzman, p. 4.

³³ <http://www.fristcenter.org/site/inthenews/newsdetail>. (Accessed 8-20-09).

In 1937, El Taller de Grafica Popular (The People's Printmaking Workshop) was established by printmaker Leopoldo Mendez (1902-1969) in Mexico. El Taller became an institution in Mexican graphic arts, with prints from the workshop and its artists receiving international acclaim. The workshop was considered a vehicle for social reform, and many of the printmakers belonged to the Mexican Communist party. El Taller was a vibrant collective of established and emerging artists committed to the use of visual art as an agent for social change. El Taller became a magnet in the progressive design community of Mexico.

The work of Jean Charlot and El Taller de Grafica Popular would later provide inspiration for SHG&A's Taller series (Atelier Program). "The Chicano movement recognized the importance of establishing its own ateliers, as well as its own publishing houses and newspapers, to disseminate cultural messages important to the Chicano community and develop an artistic and political aesthetic relevant to its experience."³⁴

Printmaking in Los Angeles

Fine art printmaking began in Los Angeles with master printer Lynton R. Kistler (1897-1993) in the 1920s. His father, William A. Kistler, established a printing business in Los Angeles ca. 1910, where Lynton learned off-set lithography. He also started working with lithographic stones, becoming one of a few local printers proficient in this process. Kistler was "attracted to off-set printing because it provided an opportunity for competent artists to make their work available on a larger scale."³⁵ In 1933, Jean Charlot began a life-long collaboration with Kistler, reputedly making the first stone-drawn color lithographs in the United States at his studio. Kistler worked with several prominent Southern California artists including modernist Stanton MacDonald-Wright, surrealist Eugene Berman, and regionalists Edward Biberian and Millard Sheets. Kistler retired from commercial printing in 1976.

Artist June Wayne produced her first lithographs at Lynton Kistler's shop in 1948. In 1960, with support from the Ford Foundation, she established the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles, a pioneering collaborative studio that helped revive American interest in printmaking, particularly by reinvigorating artistic lithography. Artists worked in tandem with a master printer to explore the medium of lithography and its creative potential. Tamarind established guidelines for the printing process that would ensure consistency for editioned prints, thus giving respectability to the medium. The Tamarind Lithography Workshop became affiliated with the University of New Mexico and relocated to Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1970.

Established in 1966 in Los Angeles, the pioneering workshop Gemini G.E.L. (Graphic Editions Limited) expanded the notion of what constitutes traditional printmaking. Co-founded by Sidney Felsen, Stanley Grinstein and Ken Tyler, the workshop has collaborated with a host of renowned contemporary artists, including John Baldessari, David Hockney, Jasper Johns, Edward Kienholz, Ellsworth Kelly, Bruce Nauman, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, Ed Ruscha, and Richard Serra. The shop offered a unique opportunity for artistic experimentation and technical innovation, cultivating an environment in which artists could fulfill their creative vision. The allure of Los Angeles, and the creative freedom seen in the wide array of media used by its artists, attracted artists from across the country. Gemini G.E.L. was instrumental in dissolving the barriers between East and West Coast artists, and worked to ensure that printmaking received the same scholarly attention as more established artforms like painting and sculpture.³⁶

Self Help Graphics & Art concentrated on the printmaking method of serigraphy or screen printing. The serigraph was developed in 1933 by artist Guy Maccoy (1904-1981), who had studied at the Kansas City Art Institute in the 1920s and painted murals for the Federal Arts Project in New York City until the late 1930s. He developed the serigraph during his time with the Federal Arts Project as a way of creating posters for the project.³⁷ In November 1938, he had the first one-man show of serigraphs at the contemporary Art Gallery in New York City and he co-founded the National Serigraph Society in the early 1940s. Maccoy and his wife Genoi Pettit moved to Los Angeles in 1947, where they taught at the Jepson Art Institute beginning in 1948 and later co-

³⁴ Guzman, p. 7-8.

³⁵ Bolton Colburn, *Across the Street: Self-Help Graphics and Chicano Art in Los Angeles* (Laguna Beach: Laguna Art Museum, 1995), p. 13.

³⁶ http://www.getty.edu/research/scholarly_activities/events/gemini_gel.html. (Accessed 12-24-09).

³⁷ Maccoy developed the serigraph as a medium for watercolor but found that it didn't hold the registration. Oil paint was used by the artists of the Federal Arts Project and eventually became the medium of choice for serigraphs.

founded the Western Serigraph Institute in the 1950s.³⁸ Maccoy is credited as the first artist to use commercial screen printing to make limited editions, and for developing the techniques of screen printing as a fine art medium.

Sister Mary Corita Kent was trained in serigraphy by one of Maccoy's students, Maria Sodi de Ramos Martinez, the wife of muralist Alfredo Ramos Martinez (1871-1946). Sister Corita was one of many artists, as part of the Western Serigraph Institute, who exposed thousands of people to serigraphy in California by circulating exhibitions of their prints to art centers, communities, schools and universities. Sister Corita gained the attention of the art world and created public interest in the medium of serigraphy, a screen printing process that allowed for the use of vivid colors. In 1951, she won first prize for a serigraph print competition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. By the 1960s, Sister Corita's distinctive posters, with their bright graphics and popular theological slogans, permeated the counterculture and became grassroots icons.

Sister Corita's success would inspire the work of Self Help Graphics & Art through her former student, Sister Karen. The screen print made high quality reproductions possible for artists from all socio-economic classes and a viable medium for an artists-run organization like SHG&A. This has allowed the organization to support and encourage local artists to print at their facility, running counter to the historical bias in Los Angeles printmaking toward exclusivity and market development.

Programs and Events established at SHG&A

From the beginning, SHG&A offered a wide range of educational workshops, cultural programs and community events, including the earliest Day of the Dead celebration in Los Angeles, Barrio Mobile Arts Studio, The Vex music venue, and numerous print Ateliers. As explained by Sister Karen, "There is instruction for young and old people—in parks, housing projects and community centers. We offer unique vital learning experiences in terms of taking a holistic approach to art education—culture, esthetics, technique—and of course all of it designed to point the Chicano toward a feeling of self-worth."³⁹

The traditional Mexican celebration of All Soul's Day, El Dia de Los Muertos or **Day of the Dead**, is a national Mexican holiday celebrated on November 2nd each year. The purpose of this autumn jubilation is to commemorate the dead and reaffirm the joy of life. Day of the Dead is a blending of the Roman Catholic celebration of All Soul's Day with the Mexican Indian tradition of the acceptance of death. The celebration consists of a solemn mass, a procession, and festive activities. From its inception, SHG&A sponsored Day of the Dead celebrations and played a major role in its resurgence in Los Angeles.

SHG&A began celebrating Day of the Dead on November 2, 1972. Several artists met in the Evergreen Cemetery in East Los Angeles on Cesar Chavez Avenue (formerly Brooklyn Avenue) to celebrate and honor the dead, as their ancestors in Mexico had done centuries before. The ceremonial procession of masked and costumed artists included Beto de la Rocha, Gronk and Robert Gil de Montes. In subsequent years, more artists took part in the celebration, contributing original masks, costumes, posters and altars. Youth workshops were developed to educate young artists about the centuries-old tradition. Starting at the cemetery, Sister Karen would lead a procession alongside community residents, artists, patrons, and youth, carrying on a tradition that has had an indelible impact on Los Angeles culture for more than thirty-five years.⁴⁰

The **Barrio Mobil Arts Studio** was one of several outreach efforts launched by Sister Karen to expose the community to the arts. Established in 1975, the program's mission was "to develop the individual's aesthetic appreciation, to provide an alternative mode of self-expression, and to increase the individual's appreciation of Chicano culture."⁴¹ The studio was housed in a large van manned by a team of artists and equipped with art supplies that would visit public and private schools to teach photography, batik, sculpture, painting, silk-screening, puppetry and filmmaking. On weekends, the studio would venture into local neighborhoods to provide arts training to residents. It was especially important to Sister Karen that the lessons taught not only art but also community pride and self worth. Participation was encouraged even among members of street gangs, who used the materials to publish a newsletter about gang activity. The "gang news sheet" featured articles, cartoons and commentary on youth

³⁸ In 1947, Herbert Jepson founded the Jepson Art Institute in Los Angeles. It was an art school which flourished from 1947 to 1953 and became an important center for experimental figure drawing, art theory and printmaking.

³⁹ "Sister Karen Bocalero," *Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 1978.

⁴⁰ <http://www.selfhelpgraphics.com/events/diadelosmuertos.php>. (Accessed 10-16-09).

⁴¹ Self Help Graphics & Art brochure, 1979.

activities.⁴² The Barrio Mobil Arts Studio was phased out between 1985 and 1990, but it would serve as a model for similar programs that followed in Los Angeles and elsewhere.⁴³

From March to November 1980, the upstairs reception hall of SHG&A doubled as **The Vex**, an all-ages music club providing a rare venue for emerging East L.A. punk and new wave bands to perform in their own community. The Vex was co-founded by Sister Karen and Willie Herron of the bilingual Chicano New Wave band Los Illegals. They wanted to give punk rock and New Wave an East L.A. home, merging music with the neighborhood's rich history of Chicano public arts activism. Herron was already known as a muralist and founding member of the Chicano art group ASCO, a conceptual art collective borne out of the Chicano civil rights movement. He first met Sister Karen in 1973 when he exhibited his art at SHG&A. The frustration of not being able to book shows at any of the major Westside clubs – and feeling unwelcome in them – prompted the creation of an alternative performance space. SHG&A provided the space for The Vex, just as it had provided artists with one of the few outlets to exhibit and sell their work.

The Vex opened its doors on March 22, 1980 and held shows twice a month. The first show was hosted by Chicano artists Gronk and Jerry Dreva and included sets by Los Illegals, The Brat, Fender Buddies and The Plugz. “Each show stuck to ... ‘the Vex spirit,’ the commitment to having crowds of mixed races from all sides of the city and mixed bands (from the Minutemen to the Speed Queens, from The Gears to The Smog Marines) come together in a place where you paid what you could at the door, beers were a quarter, and punk was another word for unity. At The Vex, the city left its borders at the door. If you showed up, you weren’t just pledging allegiance to a new vision of punk, you were pledging allegiance to a new vision of L.A.”⁴⁴ In addition to booking East L.A. bands, Herron lined up Westside groups like The Plugz, The Differentials, The Gears and X. When a November 1980 show by local punk rock group Black Flag ended in a riot, The Vex closed for good.⁴⁵

In 1982, SHG&A launched the **Atelier Program**, an experimental screenprint workshop in fine art serigraphy. The idea grew out of a series of prints by local artist Beto de la Rocha. The color definition was complex, and the studio decided to develop the workshop with a master printer. “Serigraphy, a form of printmaking using screens and stencils, would permit artists, guided by master printers, to make or ‘pull’ prints in a supportive atmosphere. Over time, Self Help’s goal was to continue the silk-screen program and expand it by also including intaglio and lithography, prints made by etching or drawing on plates to pull the print.”⁴⁶ Serigraphy provided greater latitude for individual expression and created a higher quality product, enhancing the prestige of the artist and SHG&A.

Working with master printer Stephen Grace, Gronk was the first artist to pull prints in the new workshop in 1982. The sale of prints also created a funding opportunity for SHG&A. Concerned about exploiting the artist, Sister Karen applied for a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to fund the program. In 1983, she renamed the workshop an “atelier” based on her experience as a student in Italy. The Atelier Program workshops were held twice a year and centered around a theme with students guided by a master printer in a supportive atmosphere. The goals remained the same: to create opportunities for artists to experiment with the medium, to promote the art, and to raise money for the workshop.

Participants in the Atelier Program included Gronk, Leo Limon, Barbara Carrasco, Yreina Cervantez, Alonso Davis, Diane Gamboa, Willi Herrón, Dolores Guerrero-Cruz, Eloy Torrez, John Valadez, Margaret García, Gilbert Luján, Frank Romero, Alfredo de Batuc, Wayne Healy, Patssi Valdez, Robert Gil de Montes, Alex Alferov, and Michael Amescua. Master printers have included Stephen Grace, Oscar Duardo, and José Alpuche.

In 1993, a traveling exhibition, *Chicano Expressions*, toured internationally to South Africa, South America and Europe. Funded by the Arts America Program of the United States Information Agency, the show comprised of twenty artists including some

⁴² Guzman, p. 10-11.

⁴³ The Barrio Mobil Arts Studio has recently been reactivated by SHG&A.

⁴⁴ Josh Kun, “Vex Populi” *Los Angeles Magazine*, March, 2003. <http://www.elaguide.org/Peoples/joshkun.htm>. (Accessed 12-24-09).

⁴⁵ This short-lived experiment with musical performance was not the first for this community landmark. The building has a large open room on the top floor, and it was used as a dance hall in its previous incarnation as the CYO. The CYO had been an important community gathering space for pioneering East L.A. garage bands in the 1950s and 1960s. The building became a space that made community possible by giving it a place to be proud of, whether through music or art.

⁴⁶ Guzman, p. 15.

affiliated with SHG&A and the Atelier Program.⁴⁷ Sister Karen secured funding to send SHG&A staff to travel with the exhibition, helping to foster networking with artists from the countries visited. This cultural exchange and international recognition for SHG&A has grown over the years, with local artists continuing to travel abroad and international artists frequently exhibiting their work at SHG&A.

Chicano Art and the Artist-Activist

There were other art centers in Los Angeles promoting the work of Chicano artists at the time SHG&A emerged, although very few survive today. Two of the most prominent were Mechicano Art Center and Goetz Gallery. Mechicano Art Center was co-founded by activist Victor Franco in 1969 and opened in a space near La Cienega Boulevard and Melrose Avenue in West Hollywood. Franco's concept was to establish the gallery in a more affluent part of town, then move to East Los Angeles with the "tools and the contacts necessary to implement the project successfully there."⁴⁸ After several successful shows, the center moved to Whittier Boulevard in East Los Angeles where it offered workshops and hosted cultural events with music, art and theater. The artists at the center painted over fifty murals at the Ramona Gardens and Estrada Courts housing projects in East Los Angeles. John Gonzalez opened Goetz Gallery in 1969 on First Street in East Los Angeles. It became the first commercial space dedicated to Chicano artists. Although Goetz Gallery became active in the community mural program, its primary focus was to operate as a private gallery. Neither Mechicano Art Center nor Goetz Gallery is still in operation.

The 1970s saw the creation of many community arts centers and programs throughout Los Angeles and California. They included: Plaza de la Raza arts workshop founded in the 1970s; Judy Baca's mural project, which was incorporated into the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks in 1976, Baca then left to establish the Social and Public Arts Resources Center (SPARC) in 1977; Centro de Arte Publico founded by Carlos Almaraz and Richard Duardo in Highland Park; and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE) founded in 1978 by Robert Gil de Montes, Gronk and Harry Gamboa. During this same period, the Galeria de la Raza emerged in San Francisco's Mission District and the Centro Cultural de la Raza was established in San Diego. The need for an organized arts advocacy voice brought these groups together to form Concilio de Arte Popular, a grassroots artists' collective that demanded a place alongside more established institutions like the California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The artist-activists heading up these collectives were formally trained artists and street artists dedicated to creating art and educating their community. "They were united in their strong commitment to their community and to social change. Their purpose in making art was characterized by an attempt to express Chicano identity through a language particular to their culture, and by their objective to educate the community in classes and workshops."⁴⁹ Art served as a tool for social change, and the most important art forms, graphics and murals, were social and collective.

Two important collectives emerged in Los Angeles in the 1970s: Los Four and ASCO. Both were characterized by specific iconography and style that helped to shape and define the Chicano aesthetic. The members of Los Four—Carlos Almaraz, Gilbert Lujan, Beto de la Rocha and Frank Romero—all held MFAs from art schools and universities and brought the influence of that academic training and experience to their work. However, they combined their formal training with their Chicano backgrounds to create a bridge between the Chicano and mainstream art communities. With their landmark exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1974, entitled *Los Four: Almaraz, de la Rocha, Lujan, Romero* (February 26 - April 7, 1974), the Los Four became the first Chicano group to challenge and gain access to the art world at the same time.

On the other hand, ASCO forged another direction with sophisticated, street-smart conceptual art. In 1972, Willie Herron, Gronk, Patssi Valdez, and Harry Gamboa, Jr. formed the multi-media arts collective ASCO. None of the members were formally trained, but they worked to channel the Chicano movement's political battles for social justice into artistic wake-up calls. They created performances, street theater and conceptual art that satirized the emerging styles of Chicano art, including the piece *Walking Mural*, where ASCO members paraded down Whittier Boulevard dressed as Chicano mural icons. In the guerrilla performance piece *Spray Paint LACMA*, members tagged their names on the exterior walls of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, using

⁴⁷ Under its Arts America program USIA administers the overseas performing and fine arts programs of the U.S. government.

⁴⁸ Oral interview with Victor Franco in July 1972 for the Archives of American Art in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution.

⁴⁹ Colburn, p. 26.

the barrio turf-staking practice of graffiti as a conceptual critique and converting the museum into a work of Chicano art. Their method of art practice was rooted in political protest, rejecting the more readily legible and democratic manner of social realism.⁵⁰ Artists from both Los Four and ASCO were very active at the studios of SHG&A.

Conclusion

Self Help Graphics & Art, located at 3800 East Cesar Chavez Avenue, is the leading visual arts cultural center serving the predominantly Chicano community of unincorporated East Los Angeles. It was founded by community activist Sister Karen Bocalero, a Franciscan nun committed to bringing about social change in response to the sociopolitical realities of the era. SHG&A's emphasis on printmaking perpetuates a traditional Mexican art form among new generations of Mexican American artists, while instilling core values of self-reliance and empowerment. Established during the cultural rebirth that accompanied the Chicano Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, SHG&A nurtured the talents of emerging Chicano artists through training and giving exposure to young artists, many of whom have gone on to national and international prominence. It remains a self-reliant non-profit organization that has outlasted many of its contemporaries. Prior to SHG&A, CYO occupied the building from 1944 to 1979 playing a similar role as its successor as an important community venue to engage Mexican and Chicana/o youth in East Los Angeles through community empowerment, educational programs and social and cultural gatherings. The center was established on the heels of the Zoot Suit Riots in 1943. CYO was also the incubator for the Chicano/East Los Angeles rock and roll sound developed during the 1950s and 1960s that went on to reach national and international recognition. For these reasons, the building at 3800 East Cesar Chavez Avenue is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criteria 1 and 2.

⁵⁰ <http://www.elaguide.org/Peoples/joshkun.htm> and <http://www.galeriadelaraza.org/eng/exhibits/archive/artists>. (Accessed 1-7-2010).

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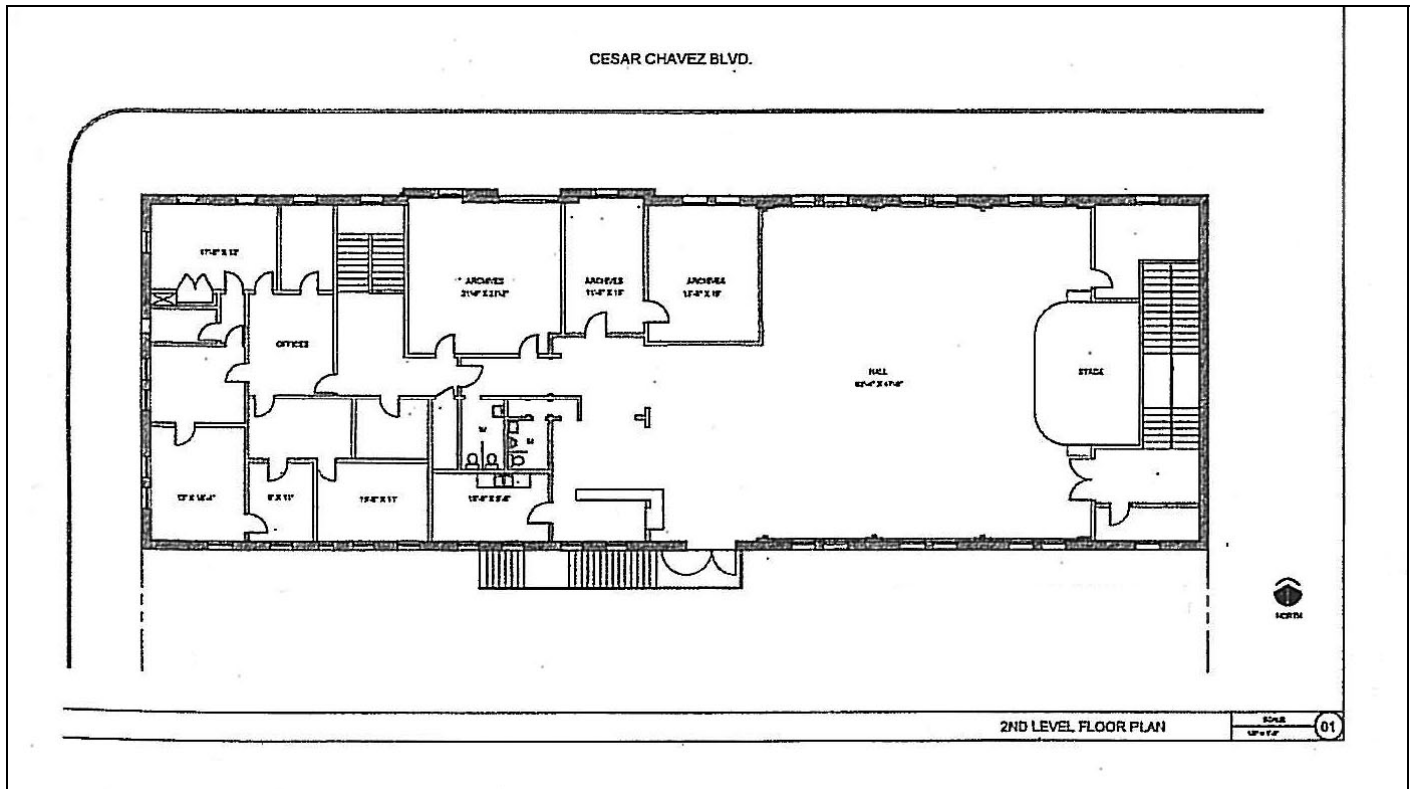
Photographs:



Catholic Youth Organization, ca. 1970. (Barrio Planners, Incorporated)



3800 Brooklyn Avenue, ca. 1975. (Rosanna Ahrens)



Floor plan for second floor level. (Self Help Graphics & Art)



Artist Eduardo Oropeza in front of his shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe. (<http://glenngreengalleries.com>).



Poster from opening night of Vex, March 22, 1980. (Self Help Graphics & Art)

Existing Conditions Photographs



North and west primary facades. (Edgar Garcia)



East façade with mural. (Edgar Garcia)



West façade. (Edgar Garcia)



West and south facades. (Edgar Garcia)



South façade. (Edgar Garcia)



Shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe in the parking lot. (Edgar Garcia)



South façade with embedded ceramic pieces. (Edgar Garcia)



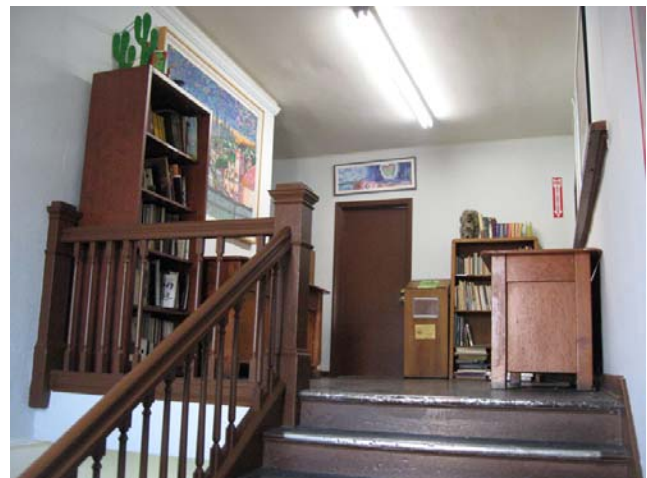
South façade. Detail of embedded and projecting ceramic pieces. (Edgar Garcia)



South façade. Detail of embedded ceramic pieces. (Edgar Garcia)



Primary stairwell to second floor. (Edgar Garcia)



Primary stairwell at second floor landing. (Edgar Garcia)



*Second floor hallway to multi-purpose room looking east.
(Edgar Garcia)*



Multi-purpose room looking south east. (Edgar Garcia)



Detail of stage in multi-purpose room. (Edgar Garcia)



Multipurpose room looking south west. (Edgar Garcia)



*Detail of concrete column in multi-purpose room.
(Edgar Garcia)*



*Arched openings and counter at rear of multi-purpose room.
(Edgar Garcia)*

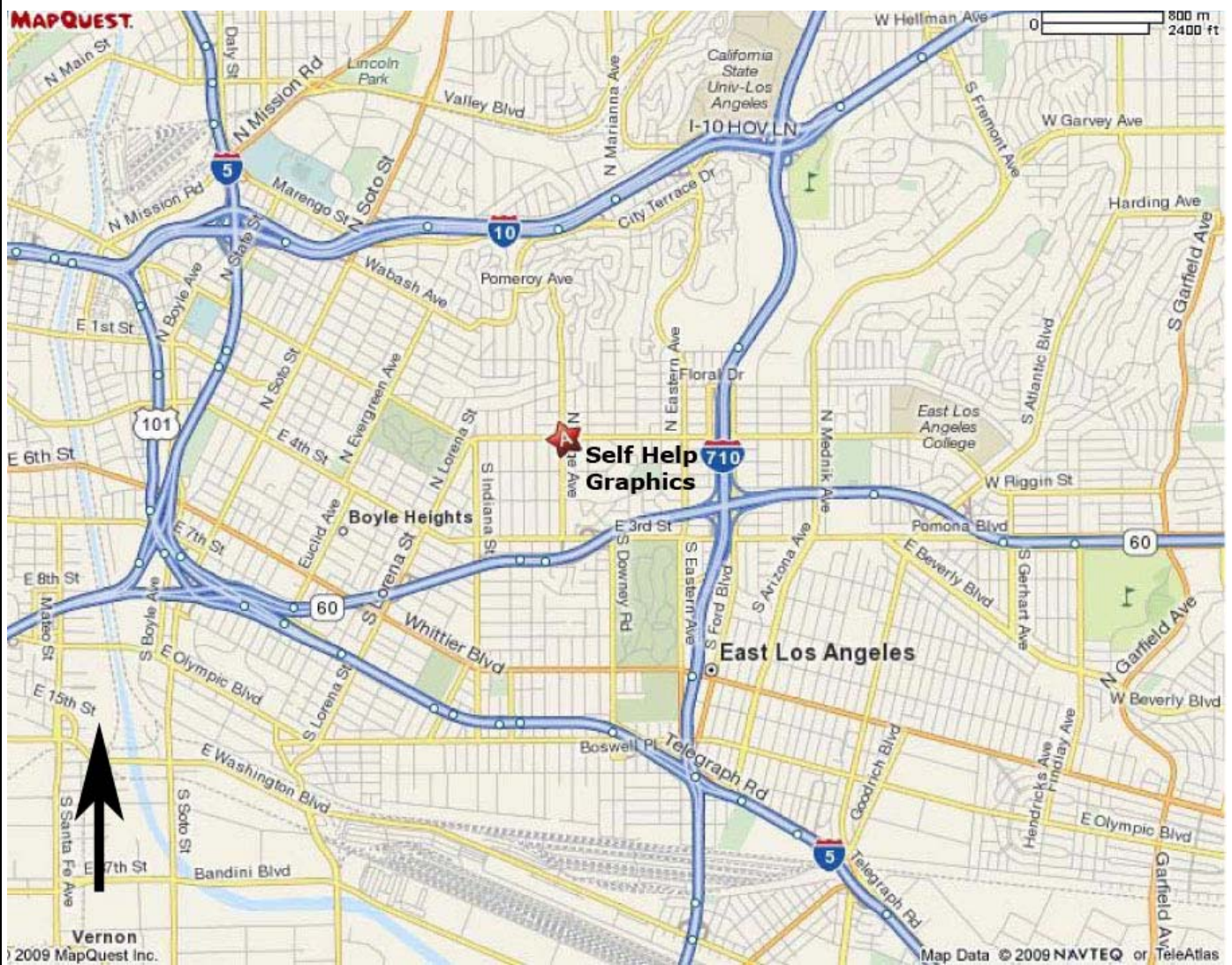


Arched openings and counter looking toward multi-purpose room.
(Edgar Garcia)
Arched openings and counter at rear of multi-purpose room



Typical office space on second floor. (Edgar Garcia)

Map showing location of subject property:



Additional References (Annotated pending)

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