

EAST AUSTIN'S BARRIO LANDMARKS

A Tour of Mexican American Heritage, Past & Present

This tour seeks to honor the important history and legacy of the Mexican American community in East Austin. The sites covered here scratch only the surface of the people and places that make up this rich cultural past and present. It is also important to note that the Mexican American community's impact on Austin is extensive and reaches beyond East Austin, including areas south of Lady Bird Lake such as Bouldin Creek and Montopolis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Preservation Austin extends our sincerest thanks to the following individuals for their invaluable assistance with this project:

Ana Maciel

Bertha Rendon Delgado

Bob Ward

Elisha Perez

Danny Estrada

Fidencio Duran

Frank Wick

Gilbert Rivera

Joel Morgan

Jon Hagar

John Cazares

Lori Moya

Matt Cisneros

Melanie Martinez

Regina Estrada

Robert Herrera

Selena Souders

The research and content for this tour was prepared by Preservation Austin's 2021-2022 Fowler Family Foundation Underrepresented Heritage Interns, Katherine Enders and Catalina Chernavsky Sequeira. Preservation Austin is indebted to the Fowler Family Foundation for supporting this work and making this project possible.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT

Austin has a history that long predates the Republic of Texas and its eventual annexation as a state. Indigenous people such as the Tonkawa, Comanche, and Lipan Apache lived in this area for centuries. European countries began colonizing Central and South America in the 16th century, and by 1690 present-day Austin was part of the New Spain territory. The convergence of both Indigenous and European traditions created a distinct Mexican culture for those living under Spanish rule.

This strong cultural identity led the Mexican people to successfully fight for their independence from Spain in 1821. Their territory, which still included present-day Austin, became the Mexican Empire. The new country was subject to a great deal of instability however, and the concurrent westward expansion of the United States pushed many Anglo settlers into the northern regions of the Mexican Empire. This influx of white settlers eventually led to the Texas Revolution in 1836, followed by the annexation of Texas as a state in 1845. This meant that many Mexican people who had been on the land for generations suddenly found themselves in U.S. territory.

Austin, originally named Waterloo, had been founded by Anglo settlers in the 1830s and was chosen as the capital city of Texas in 1839. Mexican settlement here began slowly in the 1870s, then increased greatly in the early 1900s due to instability caused by the Mexican Revolution. Many Mexican immigrants found work and economic opportunities in roles once held by Black Americans who began migrating north in the decades following the Civil War.

Mexican communities originally formed near the banks of the Colorado River and Shoal Creek, but implementation of the infamous 1928 City Plan radically altered the city's settlement patterns. This highly discriminatory plan pushed Black families to East Austin by denying them municipal services in other areas of the city. This, along with racially-restrictive covenants in other areas of the city, ultimately pushed Mexican American families east as well. This segregation was further solidified by Austin's urban renewal and "slum clearance" movements in the 1950s.

In spite of this unfair treatment, Mexican American Austinites formed a vibrant and close-knit community just north of the Colorado River, now Lady Bird Lake, with commercial districts along East 6th and East 7th Streets. That community is still present today, and many that live in the neighborhood have roots that go back generations. Although gentrification and displacement have drastically changed the neighborhood in recent years, many of the people and places that have been the lifeblood of East Austin remain.

ABOUT THE ROUTE

The ensuing content corresponds to a 12-mile bike route. The loop begins at Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach. Parking is plentiful close to the ride start.

The route is mostly flat and suitable for anyone experienced in urban cycling. A child or a rider unused to urban cycling should ride with an experienced rider. Please note that Palm School and the Mexican American Cultural Center are in the Rainey Street neighborhood, which can be high traffic. An alternative route that avoids crossing I-35 is suggested in the GPS route. All sites are accessible by foot or car as well.

Please note, some locations on this tour are not open to the public and are meant to be experienced from the public right-of-way. Please be mindful of owners' property and privacy.

ACCESS THE BIKE ROUTE THROUGHRIDE WITH GPS HERE.

Preservation Austin exists to empower Austinites to shape a more inclusive, resilient, and meaningful community culture through preservation. If you enjoy this tour and would like to support us in this work, become a member at preservationaustin.org.






POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach
2. Fiesta Gardens
3. Lorraine "Grandma" Camacho Activity Center
4. Holly Street Murals
5. La Loteria Mural
6. Herrera House
7. Oswaldo A.B. Cantu Pan American Recreation Center

8. Zavala Elementary School
9. Cristo Rey Catholic Church
10. Santa Rita Courts
11. Parque Zaragoza
12. Estrada's Cleaners
13. Joe's Bakery
14. Rabbit's Lounge
15. La Perla Bar
16. Cisco's Restaurant + Bakery
17. Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church
18. Briones House

19. Green and White Grocery
 20. Richard Moya House
 21. Willow Spence Historic District
 22. Quintanilla House
 23. Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center
 24. Palm School
 25. Republic Square
- ★ Mexic-Arte Hours: M-Sat 10 am - 5 pm, Sun 12am - 5pm

LEGEND

-  Start
-  Points of Interest
-  Murals
-  National Register District
-  Local Historic District



1. EDWARD RENDON SR. PARK (DEDICATED 2007)



Edward Rendon Sr. was a longtime activist whose legacy is still felt today. He was a founding member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the East Town Lake Citizens Neighborhood Association, also serving as the association's president. Rendon was a stonemason and restored Cristo Rey Church, along with many limestone houses in the neighborhood. His own home, which he built himself and served as the site of much

of his organizing, was demolished in 2019 despite the efforts of family members and preservationists. After participating in successful protests to remove Aqua Fest in 1978, Rendon led clean up efforts and recruited the help of Marcos de Leon, Hortensia Palomares, Elisa Rendon Montoya, Paul Hernandez, and then mayor Carol Keeton Strayhorn. He built the park from the ground up, planting trees, installing picnic tables, and creating a space for people to enjoy. In 2007, the park, which includes Martin Pool, was renamed in Rendon's honor. League of United Chicano Artists (LUCHA) artist Ramon Maldonado had painted a mural at Martin Pool in 1982. With the help of Arte Texas, Maldonado and several community members restored his work in 2020. The Chicano Park Mural celebrates the community that Rendon fought so hard to uplift.

2. FIESTA GARDENS - 2101 JESSE E. SEGOVIA ST (1966, NR LISTED 2019)



Situated on the northeast shore of Lady Bird Lake, Fiesta Gardens was designed by William C. Homans as a mid-century modernist interpretation of Pueblo Revival architecture. Originally a privately owned entertainment complex within a primarily Mexican American residential community, it served as a tourist attraction for those who lived outside of East Austin, including craft shops and water-based entertainment. The

City purchased Fiesta Gardens in 1967 and reopened it for a public facility. Fiesta Gardens has also been the site of many historic protests. In 1974, Jesse Segovia led neighbors in resisting the expansion of the park into the surrounding residential areas. In 1978, the Brown Berets, a community activist group spearheaded by Paul Hernandez, led a successful protest against the annual Aqua Fest that infiltrated and disrupted the community. As a result, the festival was moved to Auditorium Shores. Today, Fiesta Gardens is the site of many festivals and events, ranging from weddings and quinceñeras to city-wide festivals including Pride, SXSW, and Día de Los Muertos festivals.

3. LORRAINE “GRANDMA” CAMACHO ACTIVITY CENTER - 35 ROBERT MARTINEZ JR. ST



The Lorraine “Grandma” Camacho Activity Center is dedicated to outdoor activities, events, and classes for children. The center honors community matriarch Lorraine Camacho, who lived on Canterbury Street next to Metz Elementary School for over 40 years, where she earned the nickname “Grandma Camacho.” She volunteered at Metz and Zavala Elementary for many years and advocated for safety and equal

education opportunities for children. She was also a political and social advocate for the people of East Austin, campaigning for local Latino politicians including Gonzalo Barrientos, Richard Moya, and John Treviño. Along with her husband Daniel Camacho, she was active in community advocacy efforts to close the Holly Street Power Plant. The Camachos also made their home a safe house for at-risk children for many years. The Activity Center honors her legacy of supporting and fighting for the children of her community.

4. HOLLY STREET MURALS - 2298 RIVERVIEW ST (EARLY 1990S)



Built in 1958, the Holly Street Power Plant was a site of controversy for many years. It posed a great health risk to the primarily Mexican American residents living in the East Town Lake neighborhood, who fought for decades to shut down the power plant until its eventual closure in 2007. In 1991, the city installed a sound wall around the plant to reduce the noise pollution. Artist Felipe Garza gathered several artists in the

community, including Robert Herrera, Oscar Cortez, and Fidencio Duran to create murals on the wall to celebrate local heritage and make the industrial site more bearable. Many of the original murals remain and projects are underway to preserve them. La Quinceñera by Duran was restored in 2003 and For La Raza was restored by Herrera and Cortez in 2018 under the auspices of Arte Texas founded by community activist Bertha Rendon Delgado and Tanner Martinez. The ongoing restoration of these culturally significant murals represents the resiliency of the community and the preservation of el barrio.

5. LA LOTERÍA MURAL - 1619 E CESAR CHAVEZ ST (1989, 2015)



The original *La Lotería* mural, which depicted a pair of hands playing the bingo-like game that is traditional in Mexican culture, was painted by members of the League of United Chicano Artists (LUCHA) in 1989. At the time, the building housed the Austin Tenants Council and had also served as an unofficial organizing space for Chicano groups like the Brown Berets. The mural was a mainstay of the

surrounding neighborhood until a SXSW-sponsored project painted over it in 2015 without the community's knowledge or input. SXSW issued an apology in response to public outcry, and soon Arte Texas, a community organization formed to protect the historic murals that tell the history of East Austin, received funding to bring back the mural. Organizer Bertha Rendon Delgado worked with a group of East Austin students and artists, many the same that had painted the mural decades earlier, to create their version of the iconic neighborhood mural.

6. HERRERA HOUSE - 1805 E 3RD ST (1911)



The teal-colored house near the corner of 3rd and Chicon Streets was home to three trailblazing educators and activists in Austin for over one hundred years. These women were Consuelo Herrera Mendez, after whom Mendez Middle School is named; her younger sister Mary Grace Herrera; and their niece Diana Herrera Castañeda. Consuelo and Mary Grace were the first Mexican American teachers in the Austin Independent School District

(AISD) teaching at several schools—including Zavala Elementary and Palm School—for 45 and 35 years, respectively. Both women fought to desegregate Austin schools and provide equitable resources and opportunities to Mexican American citizens. Diana was the first Latina to be elected to the AISD board and was a tireless East Austin activist. The house was saved from demolition in 2019, and is a rare example of the National Folk style that was popular at the turn of the 20th century.

7. OSWALDO A.B. CANTU PAN AMERICAN RECREATION CENTER - 2100 E 3RD ST (1956)



The Pan American Recreation Center opened in 1942, and has been in its current building adjoining Zavala Elementary since 1956. The Center provided services and activities for the community, especially the neighborhood youth. Boxing was its most popular activity, but children also enjoyed cooking classes, art, sewing, and baseball there. The Hillside Theater was added in 1958 and is home to the longest-running

outdoor concert series in Austin. Famed Tejano musicians, and even a very young Selena y Los Dinos, have performed on the Hillside Theater stage. Murals by Raul Valdez that depict the history of the Mexican American community were added in 1978. Valdez engaged with East Austinites to determine what they wanted to see in the murals, the resulting artwork a testament to the cultural heritage of the neighborhood. The site was renamed in honor of the Center's cherished boxing coach and community pillar Oswaldo "Atomic Bomb" Cantu in 1996 and still serves the community today.

8. ZAVALA ELEMENTARY - 310 ROBERT T MARTINEZ JR ST (1936)



Zavala Elementary originated as a 12-room brick schoolhouse built by Austin architects Giesecke and Harris to accommodate the rapidly expanding Mexican American population during the 1930s. It was inaugurated in 1936 and named after Lorenzo de Zavala to commemorate the centennial of independence from Mexico. The school was originally segregated and Mexican American children attending Palm, Metz,

Bickler, and Comal Street Schools were obligated to transfer to Zavala. With the development of two federal housing projects nearby, Santa Rita Courts and Chalmers Court, the population of the neighborhood continued to expand and the school quickly became overcrowded. As a result, additions were constructed in 1939 and 1947. Adjacent to the school is the Pan American Recreation Center that also serves an important role in the community. Zavala continues to function as an elementary school and is a mainstay of East Austin, serving the educational and community needs of the neighborhood's residents. Its motto that children continue to learn is "saber es poder," meaning "knowledge is power."

9. CRISTO REY CATHOLIC CHURCH - 2208 E 2ND ST (1959)



Cristo Rey was established in 1922 by a committee at St. Mary's Catholic Church to serve the Spanish-speaking Catholic community in Austin. The property was often flooded and temporary spaces were utilized for religious services. Following the rapid growth of the parish at mid-century, the congregation raised enough money to build a masonry church in 1959. The old church building was converted into a religious school and in 1966 another building was added to serve as a parish hall and community center. Cristo Rey has historically been a center for activism in the community. In 1968, the Economy Furniture Strike was organized at the church and in 1973 renowned labor union activist Cesar Chavez spoke to the congregation about the United Farm Workers grape boycott. Cristo Rey continues to be one of the most prominent Spanish-speaking churches in East Austin and has played a pivotal role in the city's Mexican American community.

10. SANTA RITA COURTS - 2341 CORTA ST (1939, NR LISTED 2008)



Santa Rita Courts is a public housing community in Austin, significant on a national level as the first public housing project finished under the 1937 United States Housing Act. Completed in 1939 to address local housing shortages caused by the Great Depression, Santa Rita Courts housed only Mexican American residents due to Jim Crow era "separate but equal" policies. The City of Austin claimed that Santa Rita Courts had the lowest rent in the country. Residents paid anywhere from \$10.20 - \$11.70 per month, and the average annual income of families living in Santa Rita Courts ranged from \$330 to \$840. One of the goals of early public housing was to foster strong communities, and to that end "home counselors" were available on site to help families adjust through activities such as carnivals and Christmas gift fundraisers. Santa Rita Courts was desegregated in 1968 and still functions as public housing today.

11. PARQUE ZARAGOZA - 2608 GONZALES ST (1933)



The Mexican American community lost access to its main greenspace, Guadalupe Park (now Republic Square), when families began the move to East Austin. Community leaders petitioned for a new park and after numerous requests the City of Austin acquired 15 acres for development in 1931. Parque Zaragoza, named after the Battle of Cinco de Mayo hero General Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín, opened in 1933

and immediately became an important hub for community gatherings, dances, festivals, and recreation. The Parque Zaragoza pool was a favorite amongst the neighborhood children, and one of the only places Mexican Americans were allowed to swim due to racist segregation policies of the time. Baseball games were another popular pastime, and the lively games drew crowds of spectators. The recreation center was added in 1996 and features murals by artist Fidencio Durán honoring the community leaders that advocated for the creation of Parque Zaragoza.

12. ESTRADA'S CLEANERS - 2618 E 7TH ST (1962)



Estrada's Cleaners has been operating in East Austin for over 60 years since first opening its doors in 1960. Started by Fidel Estrada Jr. in the backroom of a gas station, the operation moved to its iconic yellow building on East 7th Street in 1962. Estrada Jr. is known as a strong businessman and eastside advocate who used his business as a hub to support the neighborhood. Estrada's Cleaners often sold tickets for community fundraising events, raising

money for causes such as the Ballet Folklorico Aztlan de Tejas or the campaign of Gonzalo Barrientos. A flyer from the laundry's grand opening weekend is still framed inside Estrada's Cleaners today and advertises laundry rates of \$0.19 for shirts and \$0.39 for pants. Although the prices have changed over the years, the family behind the counter has not. Danny Estrada stepped in after his father's retirement and has kept the East Austin mainstay running.

13. JOE'S BAKERY - 2305 E 7TH ST (1962)



Joe's Bakery, the Tex-Mex gem known for its flour tortillas and all-day breakfast offerings, has been a community hub in East Austin for 60 years. Joe Avila and his wife Paula both grew up in East Austin, and when Joe had the chance to buy his mother and stepfather's bakery from them in 1962, Joe's Bakery was born. It wasn't long before Paula left her job at HEB to help Joe run the bakery. This neighborhood staple has

been a favorite of political and community leaders such as Senator Gonzalo Barrientos and Richard Moya. Although Joe sadly passed away in 2011, Joe's Bakery is still owned and operated by the Avila family. Joe's dream lives on in East Austin today because of decades of persistence and hard work from his wife Paula, his two daughters Rose Ann and Carolina, and his granddaughter Regina.

14. RABBIT'S LOUNGE - 1816 E 6TH ST (1969)



Rabbit's Lounge, named for owner Rosalio "Rabbit" Duran, was a popular gathering place known for its cold beer and Tejano music for over 40 years. Duran was an active citizen of East Austin, hosting fundraisers for people in need and other events including voter registration and clothing drives. His bar became a hub for the Chicano political movement throughout the 1970s and onwards. Judge

Bob Perkins was the first to use Rabbit's as his campaign headquarters in 1974. Chicano politicians including Richard Moya, John Treviño, and Gus Garcia used Rabbit's as a gathering place, and Duran recruited many of his customers to volunteer in their campaigns. Like at Cisco's, people who ran for office depended heavily on Duran for the East Austin vote. Duran maintained ownership of the building when it became Whisler's in 2013. Remnants of the old bar still remain, like the signage and the painting of Cesar Chavez on the exterior wall.

15. LA PERLA BAR - 1512 E 6TH ST (1940S)



La Perla is arguably the last Tejano bar standing on East 6th Street, a rapidly-changing Mexican American corridor once lined with cantinas. Its iconic sign was created by East Austin artist Joseph Henderson and depicts a sombrero leaning against the setting sun. The Tejano bar has been a community gathering place since it opened its doors in the 1940s. In earlier decades, musicians would often perform

at La Perla and the neighboring cantinas, including Manuel “Cowboy” Donley, who would later be inducted into the Tejano Hall of Fame. Music has always been an important part of the culture of East 6th Street, and cantinas provided up-and-coming Tejano musicians with a circuit to hone their craft. Similarly, the cantinas served as a place for Mexican American leaders and politicians to stay connected with the community.

16. CISCO'S RESTAURANT AND BAKERY - 1511 E 6TH ST (1950)



Nicknamed the “Mayor of East Austin,” Rudy “Cisco” Cisneros was a restaurant owner and important civic leader. Cisco’s is best known for its legendary migas, huevos rancheros, and homemade biscuits. Cisneros hosted countless fundraisers and events for the community and for politicians who frequented his restaurant, most notably President Lyndon B.

Johnson. The restaurant walls are covered with portraits of customers including Congressman Jake Pickle, Governor Bill Clements, and Governor John Connally who used Cisco’s as his eastside political campaign headquarters in the 1960s. If a politician wanted the East Austin vote, he had to come to Rudy. Upon Rudy’s passing in 1995, Cisco’s was passed onto his son Clovis who sold it to a group of Austinites, including Rudy’s grandson Matt Cisneros, in 2017. While updating the restaurant to keep it in tune with modern-day demands, the current owners have preserved the authentic, welcoming nature of Cisco’s along with its beloved menu items for years to come.

17. OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CATHOLIC CHURCH - 1206 E 9TH ST (1954)



Founded in 1907 to serve the growing community of Mexican Americans in Austin, Our Lady of Guadalupe (OLG) bears the name of the patron saint of Mexico. It was originally located at Republic Square and moved to this location in 1926 to accommodate the burgeoning parish. The present-day campus was rebuilt here in 1954. Its Classical Revival style church was designed by father and

son architects Maurice J. and Charles F. Sullivan. The church bell, weighing over 3,000 pounds and considered one of the purest-toned bells in the country, belonged first to the Austin Fire Department in 1887 and later to City Hall. OLG was the only Spanish speaking church for many years and has long been a religious and cultural keystone in East Austin. OLG has maintained its original mission of social justice and relief for its parishioners. A familiar and welcoming place for Mexican and Central American immigrants, the church's traditional style resembles the templos south of the Rio Grande.

18. BRIONES HOUSE - 1204 E 7TH ST (1947-1953, NR LISTED 1998)



Known locally as the *Casa de Sueños*, this house is the best-preserved work of builder Genaro P. Briones, who built the home in stages while residing there with his wife, Carolina. It is a rare local example of stucco decoration, a prominent style used in 1920s Mexico that later became representative of Texas folk architecture. Briones learned artistic techniques from Mexican craftsman Dionicio Rodriguez with whom he worked in Memphis.

Briones built the main house over six years and constructed additions to the home until the late 1970s. Art Deco elements throughout the home reveal Briones' unrivaled craftsmanship and artistry. One of the most impressive features is the grotto, consisting of rustic furniture resembling aged wood but made of concrete, the faux bois technique also commonly used by Rodriguez. Originally devoted to the Virgin Mary, the grotto was later dedicated to Mrs. Briones' mother, Manuelita "Nellie" Hernandez. The home remains one of the finest cases of tinted concrete in the state of Texas.

19. GREEN & WHITE GROCERY - 1201 E 7TH ST (1936)



Founded in the 1930s by Norverto and Susie Lopez, Green & White Grocery has been a family-owned business for three generations and an East Austin institution for nearly a century. Originally a general store with food and goods imported from Mexico, the shop became well-known for its tamales in the 1960s. The famous delicacy attracted hundreds of customers, especially around Christmastime, until they

stopped producing tamales in the 1990s. John Cazares Sr., Lopez's son-in-law, took over the store when Lopez died. Cazares Sr. was a supportive and active member of the community, giving credit to customers who could not always afford to pay and arranging grocery deliveries for his elderly customers. In 1993, Cazares Sr. retired and passed the store to his son, John Cazares, Jr., who transformed the grocery into a botanica in 1996. Now specializing in items that promote a healthy lifestyle including spiritual goods, votive candles, perfumes, and herbal supplements, Green & White Grocery continues to be a staple in the East Austin community.

20. RICHARD MOYA HOUSE - 1102 EAST CESAR CHAVEZ ST (1930S)



Richard Moya had a groundbreaking political career spanning over 50 years, being the first Mexican American citizen to be elected to public office in Austin and Travis County in 1970. The house on East Cesar Chavez, then called East 1st Street, was Moya's childhood home beginning in 1952. Moya inherited the house and in 1972 transformed it into a political hub, often used as the headquarters for coordinated campaigns for county, statewide, and

national efforts. Moya ran the "Brown Machine" out of this house, his infamous printing press on which most campaign materials were printed. Fundraisers, phone banking, and election nights were run out of the house throughout the 1970s to 1990s. Many others ran their campaigns out of the house including Gonzalo Barrientos, John Treviño, Bob Perkins, and Margaret Gomez. The Moya House was later home to the landscape design firm Big Red Sun, and today serves as event space. The layout of the Craftsman style house remains the same as when Moya used it for political purposes until the early 1990s.

21. WILLOW-SPENCE HISTORIC DISTRICT - 900-1100 SPENCE ST & WILLOW ST (NR LISTED 1985)



The Willow-Spence Streets Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. This small, primarily residential district also includes two churches, two stores, and a parsonage. Homes here exemplify the National Folk style of the early 20th century. Although at least one home was constructed in the 1880s, most were built between 1910 and 1930. The neighborhood became largely a

working-class Mexican American community after the 1928 City Plan segregated the city. Nearly all of the structures in the district are modestly sized and constructed out of wood. One interesting architectural outlier to note is the Mission style El Buen Pastor Presbyterian Church located at 1200 Willow Street. This neighborhood is considered an important and well-preserved example of early 20th century architecture in Austin.

22. QUINTANILLA HOUSE - 1402 E CESAR CHAVEZ ST (1899, NR LISTED 1980)



The Quintanilla House, also referred to as the Q House, is a Victorian-era home constructed of limestone and cedar. The residence was purchased by Joel Quintanilla in 1972, and later became the homebase of the League of United Chicano Artists (LUCHA) when their previous headquarters at the Juárez-Lincoln Center was demolished in the early 1980s. LUCHA was an important organization comprised of East Austin artists and

activists such as Raul Valdez, Robert Herrera, and Raul “Tapon” Salinas among others. The organization played an essential role in promoting arts on the east side by fostering the artistic community and distributing city funding and grant money to local artists. At the Q House, members honed their skills practicing murals and graffiti art on large panels set up in the backyard. Art exhibitions showcasing LUCHA member’s artwork were also hosted at the Q House. Although LUCHA was disbanded in the 1990s, their legacy and powerful artwork lives on today.

23. MEXICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER - 600 RIVER ST (2007)



As early as the 1970s community groups in East Austin began advocating for a cultural center that honored the Mexican American history and community leaders of Austin. Turning this dream into a reality became a decades-long battle that would never have come to fruition if not for the dedicated work of community leaders. After years of funding issues and political pushback, a major victory for the center was won

when voters approved a bond for its construction in 1998. Renowned Mexican architect Teodoro Gonzalez de Leon designed the building, and advocates celebrated its grand opening on September 15, 2007. In 2011 the MACC was named after task force member Emma S. Barrientos, wife of Representative Gonzalo Barrientos, to honor her lifetime of work advancing Mexican American interests in Austin. Today the MACC organizes events, such as youth camps and yearly Día de Muertos celebrations, and hosts art exhibits that celebrate Mexican American culture in Austin.

24. PALM SCHOOL - EAST CESAR CHAVEZ ST & I-35 FRONTAGE RD (1892)



Originally used as an armory and military base by the Republic of Texas, an act of the U.S. Congress transferred this site to the Austin School Board in 1887. Architect Arthur O. Watson designed the school building you see today in 1892. Originally called the Tenth Ward School, it was renamed Palm School in 1902 in honor of Svante Palm, a Swedish diplomat who resided in Austin. By the 1930s Palm School served mainly Mexican American

children, including in the nearby Rainey Street neighborhood and long before construction of I-35 created a barrier between downtown and East Austin. The school continued to serve the East Austin community until its closure in 1976 following the construction of Sanchez Elementary. The building has most recently been used by Travis County as office space, however community activists are advocating for the building to be turned into a museum honoring Mexican American and Indigenous histories.

25. REPUBLIC SQUARE - 422 GUADALUPE ST (1839)



Established in 1839, Republic Square was the heart of Austin's Mexican American community around the turn of the 20th century. The square was then called Guadalupe Park because of its proximity to the original Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. The surrounding neighborhood, dubbed "Austin's Mexico," was home to roughly 400-600 Mexican settlers.

Guadalupe Park was well-loved by the community and frequently hosted concerts, dances, vendors, and annual September 16 celebrations. When Walker's AusTex Chili opened a factory across the street from the park in 1900, many residents found work there producing chili, tamales, and Mexican seasonings. By the early 1930s, the repercussions of the 1928 City Plan pushed residents from Austin's Mexico to the east side of the city. The square was abandoned in the 1930s and later used for parking. The park reopened with gorgeous new infrastructure in 2018. Today the Mexic-Arte Museum, located a few blocks east of Republic Square, pays homage to the rich cultural history of Austin's Mexico.



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