

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
May 24, 2016 Meeting**

20. **CAR No. 16-088** (A. Thorton)

**123 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Shockoe Slip Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:**

**Install a mural with wheatpaste  
on the rear of the structure.**

**Staff Contact:**

**M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to install a mural on the rear of a brick commercial structure in the Shockoe Slip Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes to install the mural with wheatpaste and remove the mural within one to two years.

Staff has reviewed the project based on the Mural Guidelines found on page 71 of the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* and outlined below.

1. *In general, murals should be painted on removable material, not directly on a building wall. Murals should be installed on framing that allows water to weep between the mural and the wall. Attachments should not irrevocably damage the building. Painting directly onto the walls of a non-contributing building will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis. Adding a mural to a previously-painted, non-primary elevation of a contributing building will be considered on a case-by-case basis.*

The applicant is proposing to paint paper and install the paper to the brick façade with wheatpaste. Staff has consulted with City Public Art staff who advised that the wheatpaste application will last the desired two years as proposed and can be removed from the building without harming the brick.

2. *Murals painted on primary facades are not permitted.*

The proposed mural will be installed on the rear elevation of the structure and will front South 15<sup>th</sup> Street which is not a primary thoroughfare in comparison to the other streets which border the structure.

3. *A mural's appearance, colors, and scale should reflect the history of the district of which the building is a part. The use of dayglow, luminescent, or reflective paint or materials is discouraged.*

The proposed mural scale is consistent with the ghosting of the painted wall signs in this commercial area including the ghosting on the adjacent building at 110 South 15<sup>th</sup> Street. The applicant is not using dayglow, luminescent, or reflective paint and is using primarily browns, greens, and yellows which are colors found in the Old and Historic District.

4. *A mural should not obscure or distort the historic features of a building.*

The mural will be installed on a blank wall with only two openings for roll up doors and therefore will not obscure any historic features.

5. *Murals should be in compliance with the general signage requirements for Old and Historic Districts, where applicable.*

As the proposed mural is not lit, does not obstruct important architectural features, and uses colors that do not clash or conflict with the building; staff finds the proposed mural is in compliance with the applicable general signage standards in the *Guidelines*.

6. *The installation of a mural within a City Old and Historic District shall meet the definition of a substantial impact.*

Property owners within 150' of this proposed mural were notified of this application as the project met the definition of substantial impact.

7. *Applicants must provide written approval from the building's property owner.*

The applicant has provided this approval letter.

8. *Applicants are strongly encouraged to present designs unique to Richmond, not previously installed elsewhere.*

Staff is unaware that this mural has been installed at any other location.

9. *Murals are allowed on commercial buildings, as defined by current zoning.*

The subject property is zoned B-5 which is a commercial zone, and the building is used for commercial purposes a furniture showroom.

**Staff recommends approval of the project as the project meets the Commission's Mural Guidelines.** It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with the Standards for Signage in Section 30-930.7(f) of the City Code, as well as with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.