



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

5. COA-139559-2023	Final Review	Meeting Date: 12/19/2023
Applicant/Petitioner	Elaine Odell, Friends of Jefferson Park	
Project Description	Install a mural on a masonry building in Jefferson Park.	
Project Location		
Address: 1921 Princess Anne Avenue (Jefferson Park)		
Historic District: Union Hill		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant requests approval to install a mural on a non-historic masonry building in Jefferson Park ca. 1970.</p> <p>The Mural will be a community project that is funded through the City of Richmond Outdoor and Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>The mural will be painted by students who participate in the Open Space Education after-school program at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School.</p> <p>The theme of the mural will be “IN TUNE: Nature, Place, Connection”, which is meant to encourage the students to learn about and further understand the nature within the park, along with its varied histories.</p> <p>Mural installation will begin in the Spring of 2024.</p>		
Staff Recommendation		
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	None	
Conditions for Approval	None	

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p>Standards for Signage, Mural Guidelines, pg. 75</p>	<p><i>Mural Guidelines Murals (other than historic painted wall signs) may be permitted on commercial buildings, as defined by current zoning, considering the following guidelines:</i></p> <p><i>In general, murals should be painted on removable material, not directly on a building wall.</i></p> <p><i>Murals painted on primary facades are not permitted.</i></p> <p><i>A mural's appearance, colors, and scale should reflect the history of the district of which the building is a part.</i></p> <p><i>A mural should not obscure or distort the historic features of a building</i></p>	<p>The mural will not be painted on a removable material, but rather onto unpainted masonry.</p> <p>The building is octagonal in shape. Its primary elevation features the stage. The mural will be painted on the 24' x 8' elevation underneath the stage roof overhang, which is setback into the building. This area features existing lighting.</p> <p>The mural will not obscure or distort any historic features of the building.</p> <p>The conceptual mural design features leaves, flowers, and other abstract shapes. The colors are mostly greens, oranges, and reds.</p>
<p>The Design Guidelines, p. 63, #1</p>	<p><i>Do not paint historic brick or stone masonry that has not previously been painted. Painting previously unpainted masonry is historically inaccurate and is not permitted. Property owners who wish to remove paint from masonry should work with a qualified contractor knowledgeable in the use of non-abrasive cleaners.</i></p>	<p>While the guidelines do not support the painting of unpainted historic masonry, the subject building was constructed in 1970. By 1970, brick was being manufactured by machinery that would compact it much more densely than older brick which was generally molded by hand. The brick is denser, and the mortar is likely Portland cement based which is stronger than older lime-based mortars. Furthermore, this is a non-historic building that was constructed outside of Union Hill's period of significance.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of painting directly onto the masonry, rather than onto a removable material.</u></p>

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7 (b) and (c) 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.

Figures (Next Page)

Figure 1. View of the subject building looking northwest.



Figure 2. View of subject building with Princess Anne Avenue in the background. Looking north.

