

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
March 28, 2017 Meeting**

6. **CAR No. 17-033** (S. Oh)

**24 East Broad Street  
Broad Street Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:**

**Install a mural.**

**Staff Contact:**

**M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to install a mural on North 1<sup>st</sup> Street façade of three story commercial structure at the corner of East Broad Street and North 1<sup>st</sup> Street on the edge of the Broad Street Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes to paint the mural on the first story of the previously painted brick elevation.

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 existing brick building does contribute to the District as it is an Italianate commercial structure constructed in 1889 that retains its historic form. The applicant is proposing to add a mural to a previously-painted side elevation. Though the proposed elevation is a visible side elevation, the applicant has proposed to locate the mural towards the rear of the elevation to limit the impact on the City Old and Historic District.

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

The proposed mural will not be painted on the primary front façade. The proposed mural is to be located on a visible secondary elevation.

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 applicant has not provided details of the proposed mural. The applicant has provided information on the partner agency (the Girls for Change program) and examples of previous murals that he has completed. The proposed mural's large scale is consistent with the existing painted wall signs on Broad Street and the ghosting of the painted wall signs in this commercial

area. Staff recommends the approval of the mural be conditioned on the mural not including dayglow, luminescent or reflective paint or materials, including not using the neon colors that are presented in the sample artwork.

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

The mural will be installed on a brick wall and over infilled window openings. As details of the proposed mural have not been provided, staff does not know how the mural will interact with the window openings or the window lintels and sills. Staff recommends the sills and lintels not be painted as a part of the proposed mural.

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 and does not obstruct important architectural features; 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 property owner has signed the application.

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

The applicant will be working with the Girls for Change program to create a unique mural for this location. As details of the proposed mural have not been provided, staff recommends these details be provided for administrative review and approval prior to installation.

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

The subject property is zoned B-4 and is a commercial building.

**Staff recommends approval of the project as the project meets the Commission's Mural Guidelines with the acceptance of the following conditions:**

- The mural not include dayglow, luminescent or reflective paint or materials including not using the neon colors that are presented in the sample artwork.
- The sills and lintels not be painted as a part of the proposed mural.
- Details of the proposed mural be provided for administrative review and approval prior to installation.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the noted condition, 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.