

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
June 28, 2016 Meeting**

15. **CAR No. 16-107** (S. Pomajambo)

**708 North Meadow Street
West Grace Street Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Install a mural on the previously painted,
brick alley facing façade.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to install a mural on the northeast façade of an existing single story commercial structure on the edge of the West Grace Street Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes to paint the mural on the previously painted brick wall.

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 directly onto the brick side wall. The existing building is contributing structure to the District as it was an auto garage constructed prior to 1925. The applicant is proposing to paint the mural on a previously-painted, non-primary elevation of a contributing building which will address the Broad Street commercial corridor, and therefore staff recommends approval of the proposed mural location.

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

The proposed mural will not be painted on a primary façade as it will be painted on a side, alley facing façade.

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'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. The applicant is proposing to employ Pat Perry as the artist for the mural. Staff recommends the approval of the mural be conditioned on the mural not including dayglow, luminescent or reflective paint or materials.

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

The mural will be installed on a blank side wall and 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 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 applicant has provided this approval letter.

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

The applicant has stated that that artist will not be painting anything that has been painted at other locations.

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

The subject property is zoned R-48 which is a multifamily residential district. The mural will be located on a commercial building as the structure has a storefront and is operated as a bicycle shop. Though the buildings which front West Grace Street are residential in use and zoning, the buildings which the mural will address on Broad Street are commercially zoned and are outside the Old and Historic District. As the mural will be located on a commercial building and is oriented towards a commercial neighborhood, staff supports the proposed location.

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

- The mural not include dayglow, luminescent or reflective paint or materials.

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.