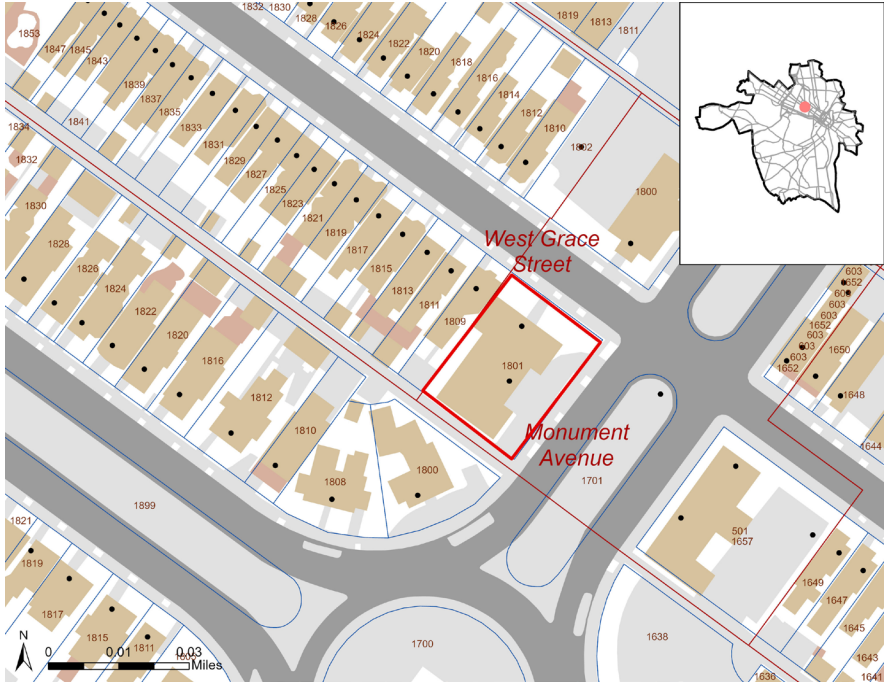


**Commission of Architectural Review**

4. COA-135633-2023	<b>Final Review</b>	Meeting Date: 9/26/2023
Applicant/Petitioner	Elizabeth LaFoon	
Project Description	Install a paneled mural on the Allen Avenue façade of a corner building.	
Project Location		
Address: 500 North Allen Avenue		
Historic District: Monument Avenue		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant proposes to install a paneled mural that will be 5' by 20'.</li> <li>• The panels will be made of marine grade plywood and will be mounted to the building in the mortar joints between the bricks.</li> <li>• The mural is planned to be installed above the school sign.</li> <li>• The mural dimensions will be about 5' by 4' for each panel, with three or four panels lining the wall vertically.</li> <li>• The color selections for the mural are purple, lavender, green, turquoise, and black.</li> </ul>		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Annie Delaroderie, <a href="mailto:anne.delaroderie@rva.gov">anne.delaroderie@rva.gov</a> , 804-646-6335.	
Previous Reviews	None	
Conditions for Approval	<p>Staff recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that the mural be installed in the mortar, as stated in the application.</li> <li>• the mural should use as few fasteners as structurally possible.</li> <li>• that the mural be installed in a way that it does not obstruct the character-defining elements on the façade: jack arches, keystones, belt course and stone sills.</li> <li>• that the mural should stay below the brick belt courses and below the third floor.</li> <li>• final placement of the mural should be submitted to Staff for Administrative Approval.</li> <li>• that there should be a 1" to 2" gap between the mural panel and the brick wall to allow for air flow and proper ventilation between the panels.</li> </ul>	

## Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards For Signage: Mural Guidelines, page 75.	<i>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 building. Attachments should not irrevocably damage the building. Adding a mural to a previously painted, non-primary elevation of a contributing building will be considered on a case-by-case basis</i>	Murals in City Old and Historic Districts should be installed on panels, so that they will not damage the historic wall and can be removed in the future. Staff recommends that the mural fasteners be installed into the mortar joints, <u>not the bricks as to not damage the historic bricks.</u> Staff recommends that the mural be installed <u>with as few fasteners as structurally possible, to minimize any damage to the mortar and brick wall.</u>
Standards For Signage: Mural Guidelines, page 75.	<i>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.</i>	The mural is planned to cover a small section on the center of the Allen Avenue façade. The plan proposed for the mural is a simple design with four female faces, and purple floral outlines. The final design will either have leafy vines throughout the panel or a necklace with flowers and hearts. Murals should not have glowing or reflective colors, as they do not resemble historic finishes.
Standards For Signage: Mural Guidelines, page 75.	<i>4. A mural should not obscure or distort the historic features of a building.</i>	This building has decorative facades with jack arches and keystones above all of the windows. Thick, stone sills are below all of the windows. Brick belt courses are between the second and third floors. The third floor has a row of four pairs of French doors, with fanlights and small, metal balconies. Staff recommends that the mural be installed in a way that it does not obstruct the <u>character-defining elements on the façade: jack arches, keystones, and stone sills.</u> Additionally, <u>staff recommends that the mural should stay below the brick belt courses and below the third floor.</u> Staff recommends final placement of the mural be submitted to Staff for Administrative Approval. Staff recommends that there should be a 1" to 2" gap between the mural panel and the brick wall to allow for air flow and proper <u>ventilation between the panels.</u>
Standards For Signage: Mural Guidelines, General Signage Guidelines, page 75.	<i>5. Murals should be in compliance with the general signage for Old and Historic Districts where applicable: 7. Signs should not be internally illuminated. 8. Signs should not use animation or flashing or moving lights.</i>	Murals similar to signs are later additions to buildings. Both murals and signs in City Old and Historic Districts should not be illuminated or have any animation on them.

*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



Figure 1. Primary façade, east side of 500 North Allen Avenue

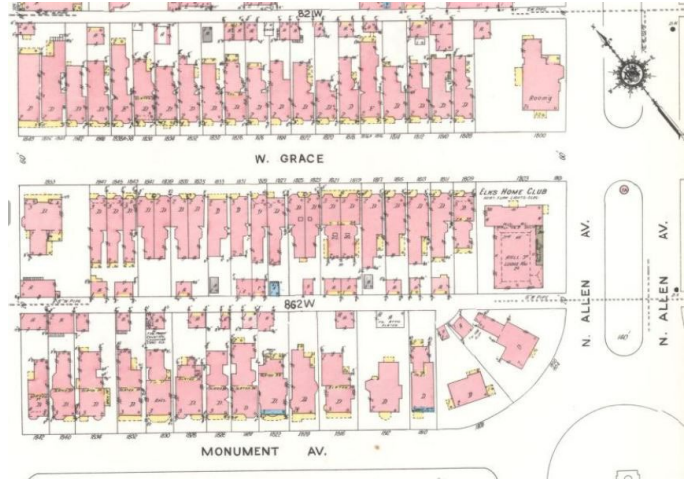


Figure 2. Sanborn Map from 1952, showing 500 North Allen Avenue at the southwest corner of West Grace Street and North Allen Avenue.



Figure 3. Primary façade, east side of 500 North Allen Avenue

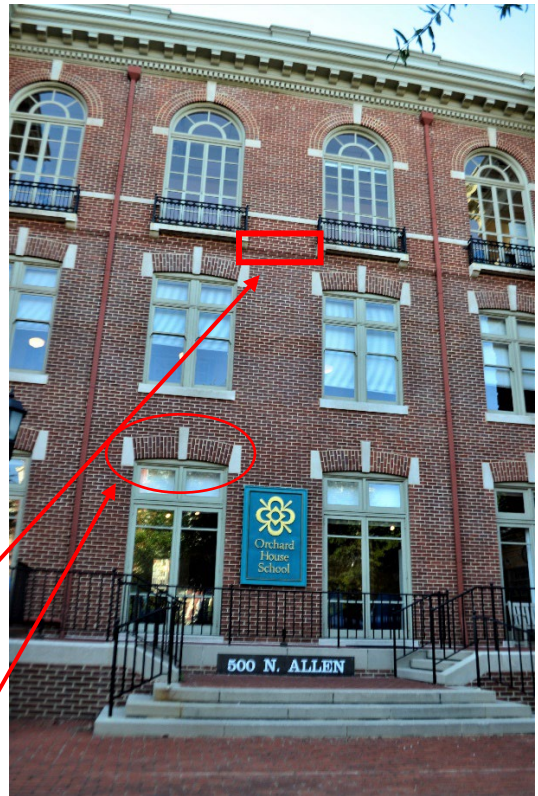


Figure 4. Approximate location of the proposed mural

Brick belt courses are in between the second and third floors.

Jack arch with keystones above each of the windows.



Figure 5. Draft of the proposed mural.



Figure 6. Second draft of the proposed mural.