



**SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT
COMMISSION
MURAL RECOMMENDATION**

PETITIONER: W. PROJECTS, ERIN WESSLING
12 West State St.
Savannah, GA 31401

FILE No.: 21-005663-PA

LOCATION: 1204 GWINNETT STREET

DATE: November 4, 2021

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval for a pedestrian walkway mural for the city property located at 1204 Gwinnett Street. The Water Works Site Pedestrian Walkway mural will be painted directly onto the asphalt of the Water Works site which is adjacent to the Arena and developing Canal District Trail.

CONTEXT:

Per the applicant: *Nearly 130 years ago, the Savannah Water Works Pump Station began treating the city's water supply at the corner of Gwinnett Street and Stiles Avenue. With its expressive arches and towering stack, the 19th-century brick industrial warehouse building strikes a commanding presence on its Westside Savannah lot. In light of the neighboring Arena District development, which began in 2020, attention turned toward breathing new life into the Water Works site while maintaining its historic character and architectural relevance. The City of Savannah has expressed a clear desire to preserve historic structures and enhance the lot for environmental, social, and economic benefits.*

FINDINGS:

The following standards from the Historic Site and Monument Commission Guidelines for Markers, Monuments and Public Art apply:

Mural Policy. Statement of Purpose: *The purpose of regulating murals is to ensure the continued visual aesthetic of the community, by establishing a process for compatible artistic and creative expression through murals in appropriate locations and designs. The review criteria seek to establish guidance as to the compatibility and appropriateness of the theme, location and design of murals, with minimal intrusion into artistic expression and/or the substantive, personal or social/political expressive content of the artwork. Murals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.*

Theme.

The theme of the mural should be respectful of the greater context of the community, including historic and socio-cultural contexts.

The content of a mural is protected under the laws of free speech.

The mural must comply with Georgia obscenity laws, as defined by O.C.G.A. § 16-12-80, and cannot depict sexual conduct or sexual explicit nudity, as defined on O.C.G.A. § 36-60-3, nor advertise any activity illegal under the laws of Georgia or the United States.

The standards are met. Per the applicant, the theme of the mural is: *Given its importance to the site and its neighboring communities, the artwork should encompass the theme of Savannah's Pathways which can be taken from physical pathways such as roads, nature trails, and man-made paths, as well as the structures, natural and/or man-made, that line those physical pathways utilizing familiar landmarks and flora or fauna native to the Savannah Area. The artwork on each section of the mural will consist of flowing gestural lines or "paths" that connect figures and flora into one body, threading a thoroughfare to our collective path, present and future. Visitors and art enthusiasts alike will share the experience of seeing themselves in the works as well as marveling in the colorways, the formal aspects of the art itself, and the flowing shapes and interconnected lines. This work is designed to create an endless number of paths within the pathway.*

Location.

The installation of a mural should complement and enhance the building and be incorporated architecturally into the façade.

The location of the mural on the building should not cover or detract from significant or character-defining architectural features.

The mural is not on the Water Works building; however, it is intended to complement the building's surrounding site and context. The standards are met.

Murals should enhance and complement the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Murals should not be located in an area which may cause undue distraction to drivers thereby creating a safety hazard.

The standards are met. The mural will be respectful to the greater context of the neighborhood and, because it is generally internal to the Water Works site, will not cause undue distraction to drivers.

Generally murals should be located in mixed use and commercial areas.

The standard is met. The mural is located within a mixed-use area.

Neighborhood support or opposition should be taken into consideration.

The standard is met. The public was notified. No response was received. However, per the applicant: *During the RFP submission period an online Webinar was held for the public to*

answer any questions and expand on the concepts of both the mural pathway and the entire Water Works site activation. In addition, the Arena Community Task Force which is comprised of several presidents and active members of several West Wise Neighborhood Associations as well as Alderman Lanier, was presented the mural project concept, and chose the theme of the mural itself “Savannah Pathways.” Several of the chosen artist groups will be holding charettes with neighboring communities to present their designs and gain feedback and engagement.

Murals should be sited far enough away from other murals as to allow the visitor proper appreciation of each individually and not cause visual clutter to the block face.

To staff’s knowledge, no other murals are located in the vicinity.

Murals are not permitted on unpainted historic materials.

The treatment and application of murals located on any historic material should follow all relevant Preservation Briefs as published by the National Park Service Technical Preservation Services.

The standards do not apply as the mural is not on the historic Water Works building.

Design.

The scale of the mural should be appropriate to the building and the site.

The mural should be appropriate within the context of the surrounding neighborhood.

The mural should be an original design.

The standards are met. The mural is large, which is appropriate as this is a large site. The mural is an original design and is appropriate within the context of the neighborhood.

Paint utilized should be of superior quality and intended for exterior use. Generally reflective, neon, and fluorescent paints should not be used.

If intended to be permanent, the mural should have a weatherproof and vandalism-resistant coating.

The proposed materials are:

- Behr Premium Tinted concrete paint with primer
- Behr White concrete base paint and paint tint
- High quality exterior Modern Masters acrylic theme paint
- Exterior Water Based House Paint over top of Exterior Primer
- H&C SHIELD-CRETE Acrylic Clear Glaze Coat
- H&C COLORTOP Water-Based Solid Color Concrete Stain

Staff requests additional information regarding weatherproof and vandalism-resistant coating.

If other, non-paint materials, are proposed to be used, their lifespan should be considered and incorporated into the removal plan, if temporary.

No non-paint materials are proposed.

Artist Qualifications.

The artist should have completed projects of similar size and scale in the public arena and be able to provide appropriate documentation.

The artist should have an excellent reputation and be able to provide verifiable references attesting to the quality of work.

The artist should be able to provide images or samples of existing similar monuments or works of art.

The artist should be able to demonstrate the ability to meet the proposed timeframe.

There are four artist teams each led by experienced mural artists; the four mural artists are Adolfo, Amiri, Brian McGregor, and Hebermehl. Past work was provided for the selected mural artists; these artists were selected through an RFP (Request for Proposals) process; they were selected by a group of community members and public art enthusiasts within Savannah.

Per the applicant: *Timeframe will depend on construction development of the Canal District Trail and the completion of the Enmark Arena. Each section will be scheduled by its designated area with position 1, bordering the Arena to start in December of 2021 with continued installation scheduled throughout January and February of 2022.*

Funding.

Budget. *The Mayor and Aldermen do not fund new markers, monuments, or works of art. The applicant is fully responsible for funding the design, construction, installation, and any necessary landscaping, paving, or lighting involved with a new marker, monument, or work of art.*

The City is funding the project.

Public Notice. *As required in the Master Plan and Guidelines, written notice was sent to all property owners, and the neighborhood association, within 200 feet of the subject property. A sign was posted on the property fifteen days prior to the meeting.*

The standard is met.

RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL:

The Historic Site and Monument Commission recommends approval to City Council for ‘Segment 5’ of a pedestrian walkway mural for the city property located at 1204 Gwinnett Street with the following conditions because otherwise it meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art:

1. Ensure that the mural has a weatherproof or vandalism resistant coating.
2. The other segments are to come before the HSMC at a later date.

Mr. Kristofer Monroe, Chairman
Historic Site and Monument Commission

November 4, 2021
Date

Melanie Wilson, Executive Director
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

November 4, 2021
Date

Leah G. Michalak, Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

November 4, 2021
Date

MW: LGM