

## CITY OF MANASSAS ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

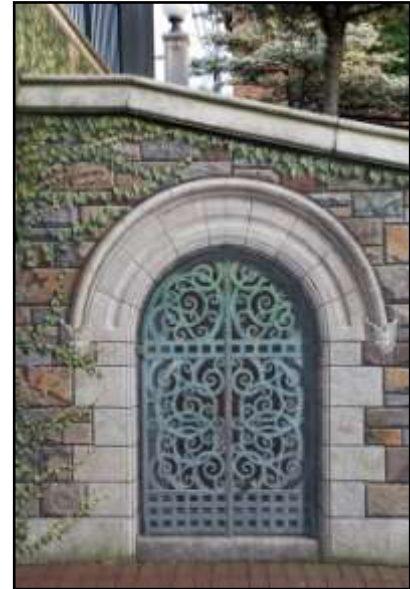
### Design Guideline Supplement #3: Mural Art

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#### **Background**

The City of Manassas Architectural Review Board reviews applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for substantial alterations to properties in the Historic Overlay District. The City of Manassas Zoning Ordinance designates the painting of non-residential structures resulting in a different color, such as mural art, as a substantial alteration requiring approval of the Architectural Review Board. The painting of mural art on small building elements, such as individual bricks and utility appurtenances (such as downspouts or raceways), shall not be considered a substantial alteration.

The Architectural Review Board supports the use of mural art in the Historic Overlay District. Mural art is widely considered one of the oldest methods of artistic expression. Murals bring art from the private to the public sphere, add visual and aesthetic value to neighborhoods, and provide a medium to display the history, beliefs and culture of a community. When appropriately executed, murals can enhance the character of a historic district.



**Figure 1.** Murals should complement the structure and be incorporated architecturally into the facade. (*Trompe l'oeil Bridge Mural, Frederick, MD*)

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of regulating mural art is to ensure the continued visual aesthetic of the historic district while allowing for compatible artistic and creative expression in appropriate locations and designs. The established review criteria provide guidance concerning the compatibility and appropriateness of the placement, massing, scale and materials of mural art with minimal intrusion into the artistic expression and content of the work.

#### **Mural Art vs. Signage**

Content distinguishes mural art from signage. While a sign specifically advertises a business, product or service through graphics or text, murals are solely artistic in nature. Murals may not include trademarks, service marks, or other markings, colors, or patterns identifying or associated with a business, profession, trade, occupation, or calling. When an official interpretation is deemed necessary, the Zoning Administrator will determine if a proposal is a mural or a sign. Mural art that constitutes a sign shall conform to the signage regulations of the zoning ordinance and applicable design guidelines.

#### **Review Criteria**

##### A. Location

1. Murals are not permitted on unpainted contributing or landmark structures. Murals on unpainted non-contributing buildings will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2. Murals may not be located on the primary façade of a building.
3. The number of murals per block face should be limited to discourage visual clutter.
4. Historically significant murals (including historic advertisements) may not be painted over, even if faded.
5. The installation of a mural should complement and enhance the building and be incorporated architecturally into the façade.
6. The location of a mural on the building should not cover or detract from significant or character-defining architectural features.



**Figure 2.** The scale of the mural should be appropriate to the building and the site. (*Historic Del Ray Mural, Alexandria, VA*)



**Figure 3.** Faded historic murals or advertisements should not be painted over. (*Candy Factory Building, Manassas, VA*)

#### B. Design & Materials

1. The scale of the mural should be appropriate to the building and the site.
2. The theme of the mural should be appropriate within the context of the surrounding neighborhood and complement the existing character.
3. The mural should be an original design.
4. Sponsor and artist names may be incorporated but should be discreet and not exceed 5% of the design or 2 square feet in area, whichever is less.
5. The treatment and application of murals on historic material should follow all relevant Preservation Briefs as published by the National Park Services Technical Preservation Services.
6. Paint utilized should be intended for exterior use and of superior quality which will not corrode or compromise the integrity of the material to which it is applied.
7. Reflective, neon and fluorescent paints should not be used.

#### **Maintenance**

The property owner is responsible for proper maintenance of the mural, including the repair of material failure (peeling paint) and promptly removing vandalism in accordance with the Property Maintenance Code.