
Regarding: 1221 Williamson Street – Third Lake Ridge Historic District – Outdoor mural by Panmela Castro. 6th Ald. District (Legistar #26237)

Date: May 14, 2012
Prepared By: Amy Scanlon, Preservation Planner

General Information:

The Applicant is requesting to have a mural painted on the west wall of the building at 1221 Williamson Street. The building is a modern building within the historic district boundary.

The Applicant appeared before the Landmarks Commission on August 8, 2011 to explain concepts for the introduction of art along Williamson Street. At that time, the Landmarks Commission requested that the Marquette Neighborhood Association (MNA) keep the Commission informed about the different installations so that each one could be evaluated against the Landmarks Ordinance.

Applicable Landmarks Ordinance sections:

33.19(11)(g) Guideline Criteria for Exterior Alteration in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Commercial Use.

1. Alterations of the height of any existing structure shall be visually compatible with the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
2. Alterations of the street facade(s) of any existing structure shall retain the original or existing historical rhythm of solids and voids.
3. Alterations of the street facade(s) of any existing structure shall retain the original or existing historical materials.
4. Alterations of the roof of any existing structure shall retain its existing historical appearance.

The Sign Ordinance states:

33.03(2) Rules and Definitions

Mural. A picture illustration or abstract expression containing no commercial message applied directly to and made integral with a wall or window surface.

Staff Comments and Recommendations:

The Third Lake Ridge section of the Landmarks Ordinance does not address the specific type of exterior alteration being requested by the Applicant. Because the mural is being located on a commercial building, it is important that the subject matter of the mural not be interpreted as signage. Staff believes the concept of a mural on the west wall of the existing building meets the intent of the Landmarks Ordinance and recommends approval by the Landmarks Commission with the following condition of approval:

- To ensure that the design of the mural does not constitute a sign under the Sign Ordinance, Zoning Staff shall approve the design of the mural prior to its installation.