


Note to Commission
1202 Williamson Street
Murals

A few months ago the Landmarks Commission approved the installation of several murals along the back of the Willy Street Park. The artist has now moved the proposed site to the side of the Social Justice Center at 1202 Williamson Street. The murals will be painted on boards that are affixed to the side of the building. This is a 1950s building of no historical significance.

I recommend approval.

K. H. Rankin 
July 2, 2008

6/21/2008

To whom it may concern,

I am the director of the Williamson St Art Center and a community artist. Murals are one of my specialties. Among my recent murals are ones at Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center, Atwood Youth Center, Lowell Elementary School, Lakeview Elementary School, Family Centers, the four exterior walls of my studio at the rear of 1020 Williamson St. and one covering an entire small building at Sun Prairie's Angel Park. Currently I am painting a mural at Centro Hispano on Madison's south side.

I am proposing the creation of a mural later this summer to be placed on panels on the south wall of the Social Justice Center on the corner of Williamson and Few Streets. The theme of the mural is ***"Willy Street in the 70's – Changing the World through Art."*** The proposal has received the endorsement of the Willy St Park Association, the Marquette Neighborhood Association, Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center, the Greater Williamson Area Business Association, Marsha Rummel, the local alderperson, and many other interested persons.

My intent in painting this mural is to tell the story of the artists, poets, musicians and social activists who lived on Willy Street in the 70's when it was primarily a working class, industrial area. It was the place where we found cheap rent and minimal restriction on our artistic expression.

Centers of artistic activity were created up and down the street. A vibrancy and a buzz resulted. From Gallery 853 to Broom Street Theater, from Mona's Way House Gallery of Light to WORT radio broadcasts at Dolly's Cafe, a community of creative people developed. Although we worked in different media, we shared a common vision and belief that through our artistic activity we could make a difference. We were a generation that had become disillusioned with the world as we found it. We created our own "counter-culture revolution" right here on Willy Street and I believe it is a story that deserves to be told.

The mural will be painted on 4' x 8' panels. I am intending to paint on cement board, rather than MDO to reduce costs. Due to the brittle and heavy nature of cement board, I intend to install the panels first, and then paint on site.

I have received a history grant from the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission to gather and record the stories of the artists and activists who will be depicted on the mural. These stories will be available on a web site I have received grants from the Wisconsin Arts Board Artists and the Madison Arts Commission to fund the actual painting of the panels. I would appreciate your support of this project. Thank you.

Sharon Kilfoy

