



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To: Patti McLauchlin, City Manager

Through: Katie P. Halloran
Planning Director

From: Enid Torregrosa-Silva MSHP
Historic Preservation Planner

Meeting Date: November 15, 2022

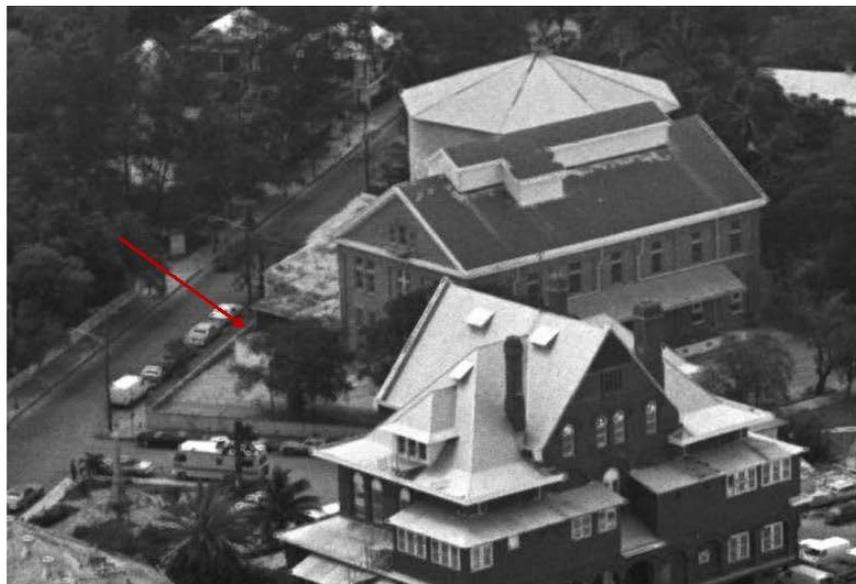
RE: New mural on lower wall at #218 Whitehead Street. Depiction of migrant birds and Key West flora using bright colors by artist Marlene Koenig.

ACTION STATEMENT:

Request: To approve a mural on the retaining wall of a non-contributing, non-historic commercial building located in the historic district.

Location: #218 Whitehead Street

Building Facts: The building located at #218 Whitehead Street is a non-contributing, non-historic structure. The commercial building, built circa 1990, is a two-story concrete structure, located at the southwest corner of Whitehead and Greene Streets. The building is located within the Key West Historic District, and it sits across the Audubon House.



Wall under review. Photograph circa 1980. Monroe County Library.

BACKGROUND:

On October 26, 2022, the HARC Commission approved a Certificate of Appropriateness #2022-0035 for a 90 feet by 5 to 6 feet tall wall mural to be painted at lower retaining wall of 218 Whitehead Street. Although the retaining wall was built by the Navy, in the 1990’s the wall was completely altered to accommodate the current building. The portion of the of the retaining wall under review has no longer historical integrity or value.

The mural design will feature a rendering of migrant birds and Key West flora utilizing a bright color palette to compliment Key West’s colorful culture. In addition, the mural will feature custom lettering work, with the proposed design reading “Key West.” The composition is a mix of silhouettes and real depiction of birds, flowers and leaves all painted over a bright green mint color background. The proposed maintenance plan takes into consideration the periodic application of clear coat sealer to protect the mural from fading. Maintenance also includes periodical cleaning and inspections.

The proposed mural is not part of required art under the Art in Public Places Program, but a contribution from the owner to enhance the existing conditions of her private commercial property. The owner has been inspired by the City’s new design of Clinton Square and wants to become an integral part of enhancing this area of the historic district.



Location of proposed mural



Proposed mural.

Artist Marlene Koenig is a visual artist and a committed instructor teaching yoga, meditation, and art through the world. She has created many small- and large-scale murals including the one found at the Splash Pad at Truman Waterfront Park and the Key West International Airport. Her work has been exhibited through the United States in cities such as Miami and Brooklyn.



Details of proposed mural.

Proposed murals in the historic district may be permitted on non-contributing commercial or public buildings. The mural will not be visible from any residence. The City of Key West Resolution 99-430 requires HARC and City Commission approval for any proposed murals within the historic district. Pursuant to the Historic Architectural Guidelines, under maintenance plan for murals, the property owner is required to post a bond to cover maintenance and/or removal. The City Commission needs to establish the amount of the bond.

PREVIOUS CITY ACTIONS:

AIPP Discussion Item October 13, 2022

HARC Approval: Certificate of Appropriateness #2022-0035
October 26, 2022

OPTIONS/ ADVANTAGES/ DISADVANTAGES:

Option 1. Approve the proposed mural to be painted on the lower retaining wall of a non-contributing, non-historic commercial building located in the historic district at 218 Whitehead Street.

Consistency with the City’s Strategic Plan, Vision, and Mission: The Strategic Plan is silent on mural paintings in the historic district. Nevertheless, the mural’s location is next to a public street, which changes and enhances the visual qualities of the streetscape, which is a goal of the Mayor’s Beautification Committee.

Financial Impact: There will be no cost to the City. Kate Miano, the owner of 218 Whitehead Street will be responsible for all aspects of the mural, including its maintenance.

Option 2. Deny the proposed mural.

Consistency with the City’s Strategic Plan, Vision, and Mission: The Strategic Plan is silent on mural paintings in the historic district. The retaining wall will be left on its current condition.

Financial Impact: There will be no cost to the City.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Department recommends Option 1, **APPROVAL** of the proposed mural.