

# Agenda Report

August 13, 2007

TO: City Council  
FROM: City Manager  
RE: Appeal of Non-action by the Arts & Culture Commission on the Concept Art Plan for 129 N. Raymond Avenue

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that City Council:

1. Find that the proposed art concept and proposed artist comply with the goals, objectives and eligible criteria outlined in the City's Public Art Guidelines as outlined in Attachment 1.
2. Approve the proposed artist, Anne Marie Karlsen;
3. Approve the proposed public art concept of two sculptural mosaic wall murals on the building's façade with the conditions outlined in Attachment 1.

## **ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

On June 13, 2007 the concept art plan for 129 N. Raymond was presented to the Arts & Culture Commission. Following discussion, two motions were made that both failed for lack of a second. No further action was taken.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Raymond Renaissance is a \$9 million mixed-use project of residential and ground floor retail space that blends the original Raymond Theatre structure with a contemporary brick edifice at the intersection of Holly Street and Raymond Avenue. The project is subject to the 1% for art requirement which the applicant seeks to satisfy through the execution of an original artwork on site.

As required by the Private Development Public Art Guidelines, a concept art plan was submitted to the Cultural Affairs Division for subsequent presentation to the Arts & Culture Commission for approval. Prior to the current proposal, the applicant submitted four earlier art concepts to Cultural Affairs staff beginning in April 2006. Each time the applicant was advised that the proposed concept would not be reviewed favorably by the Arts & Culture Commission. The applicant agreed in each case to return with a new concept rather than present to the Commission. The prior concepts included 1) two different balcony designs by

two different artists, 2) redesign of the balconies by a single artist, 3) a glass column between the two buildings, 4) a sculptural surround for the main entries, and 5) finally the current proposal for a mosaic on the new building. The Arts & Culture Commission has stated that balconies, awnings, and other architectural embellishment are not desirable as public art.

On June 13, 2007, staff recommended approval of the mosaic concept and the Commission heard a presentation from the applicant and artist. Following discussion two motions were made to approve the project or approve with conditions. Both failed for lack of a second and no further action was taken.

Although there is no specific provision in the Municipal Code for appeals of Arts and Culture Commission actions, section 17.72.030 of the Zoning Code states that "an appeal may be filed by any person affected by a determination, decision, or action rendered by the Director, Zoning Administrator, Hearing Officer, Board of Zoning Appeals, Environmental Administrator, Design Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Advisory Agency or Commission." The applicant is appealing the action of the Arts & Culture Commission to the City Council due to the lack of any other available appeal process.

The applicant has requested a timely review of the appeal as the artist will be leaving the country and terminating work if the project is not resolved. Efforts were made to convene a special meeting of the Arts & Culture Commission to allow for reconsideration and formal action. A quorum could not be gathered within the timeline permitted.

#### Proposed Artist and Concept

Proposed are two large-scale mural panels which will flank the formal entryway to the new residential structure along Raymond Avenue. Each mural contains a single form composed of abstracted imagery. The artist pays homage to the historic theatre by borrowing the classical Grecian urn motif, prominent on the theatre's façade, as the primary icon for this work.

The imagery for each mural was extrapolated from design patterns found in the theatre's decorative ceiling. The artist used a photographic technique to create an abstracted pattern of classical plaster medallions and then recomposed these mirrored images. The result is a contemporary design that is both visually complex and vibrant. A 3-dimensional aspect of this artistic kaleidoscope is provided by the addition of unfinished stone, marble and glass materials. These rough textures add depth and visual interest, again contrasting with the smooth brick façade.

The artist, Anne Marie Karlsen, has an extensive career in the field of public art with experience in a wide variety of media, ranging from ceramics to glass. She has an established presence at Paseo Colorado where two of her sculptural fountains were installed under the City's public art program. For the development of this proposed project, Anne Marie has utilized a site-responsive approach that seeks continuity between the re-adapted historic Raymond Theatre and the adjacent new residential building that together form "The Raymond Renaissance." Her extensive research into the history of the site and

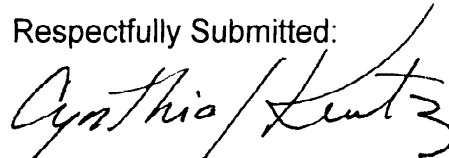
of the Raymond Theatre strongly influenced the development of her concept of mosaic wall murals.

Staff finds that proposed artist Anne Marie Karlsen has a demonstrated ability to produce innovative and finely crafted public art projects in a variety of media. Her public art proposal for the Raymond Renaissance blends derivative classic art forms with contemporary photomontage. Mosaics, as a classical art form, seem an appropriate choice of media to contrast with the modern building's red brick façade. Her proposed murals would engage pedestrian and vehicular traffic and would be a unique and appropriately site-specific addition to the City's public art collection.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

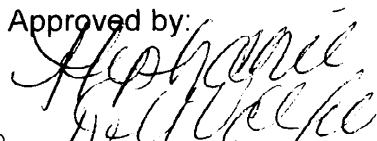
There is no fiscal impact to the City as a result of approving this concept public art plan.

Respectfully Submitted:



Cynthia J. Kurtz  
City Manager

Approved by:

  
Richard Bruckner, Director  
Planning & Development

Prepared by:

  
Stephanie DeWolfe, Deputy Director  
Planning & Development

Attachment 1: Findings and Conditions of Approval

Attachment 2: Concept Art Proposal