



Staff Report

File #: REPORT 19-0524, Version: 1

Honorable Chairman and Members of the Hermosa Beach Planning Commission

Regular Meeting of August 20, 2019

SIGN REVIEW - S4 #38 Determination on whether a proposed 616 square foot display on the west wall of the building at 22 Pier Avenue is a mural, and determination that the proposed display is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Applicant: Hermosa Beach Murals Project
710 Pier Avenue
Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

Property Owner: 22 Pier Avenue, LLC
22 Pier Avenue Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

Recommended Action:

Adopt the attached resolution and determine that the proposed display covering 616 square feet of surface area on the west side of an existing building is consistent with the Hermosa Beach Municipal Code (HBMC) definition of 'Mural' at 22 Pier Avenue (Waterman's), and determine that the proposed display is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Background:

The subject property is located at 22 Pier Avenue (Waterman's restaurant) on the south side of Pier Plaza, a popular venue for outdoor events and dining, connecting Downtown to the beach, pier, and The Strand. Pier Plaza is located directly north of the property, the Lighthouse Café is located east and adjacent to the building, public parking lot A is located to the south (across the alley 12th Court) and Beach Drive (an alley) is located directly to the west. The applicant proposes a 616 square foot (sq. ft.) display on the west side of the existing building facing Beach Drive.

Analysis:

'Mural' as defined in HBMC Section 17.50.030 means a "pictorial representation not specifically identifying goods or services offered by the business on the premises". Waterman's restaurant is a business that offers food and beverages for customers of Hermosa Beach.

The proposed display will measure 44 feet wide by 14 feet high. The mural was prepared by artist Timothy Robert Smith and the display will be the 9th mural in the Hermosa Beach Murals Project. The building wall will be primed first to create a flat and smooth surface. The display will then be hand painted directly onto the west wall of the existing building by the artist.

The mural will celebrate many elements of Jazz and Beat counterculture as it existed in Hermosa

Beach. It is designed to make viewers feel as if they can enter through a portal in time and become a part of this exciting era. Large iconic characters can be seen from the beach, luring viewers in for a closer inspection where they can try to identify all 15 hidden pieces. Everything will be painted realistically, from black & white and colored photo references, breaking the wall between past and present, evoking the feeling of being suspended in timelessness.

Pursuant to HBMC Section 17.50.140.B.7, the Planning Commission may waive specific provisions of the sign ordinance relating to total sign area, coverage, height, type, and style for a display deemed to be a mural. If determined to be mural, the Planning Commission may allow the display to exceed the total 60 sq. ft. maximum sign area by an additional 556 sq. ft. and exceed the 25% maximum wall coverage along Beach Drive by occupying 39% of the wall area.

The applicant has been informed and the project has been conditioned requiring that a Right-of-Way Permit be obtained from the Public Works Department and that traffic control plans be provided to the Public Works Department for review and approval in order to occupy the right-of-way while painting the display.

General Plan Consistency:

The project site is located within the General Plan (PLAN Hermosa) Recreational Commercial land use area and within the Downtown District which serve as the primary cultural and entertainment center for the community (residents and visitors) with events, activities, and social gatherings often occurring here” (PLAN Hermosa, Pg. 76 and 91). “The pedestrian orientation of Downtown streetscapes should be improved through provision of arts and cultural activities focused in and around the Downtown” (PLAN Hermosa Pg. 91).

“The City of Hermosa Beach’s artistic past has shaped its vision and guiding principles for the future, and continues to resonate today. Public art includes artwork placed and integrated into the public realm for the community to enjoy. They provide both aesthetic and practical purposes that enhance community character and shapes identity. The public art and design in Hermosa Beach is a true reflection of the City’s name, “Hermosa”, meaning “beautiful” in Spanish. Since incorporation in 1907, the city has evolved into a vibrant and distinct beach community. The prevalence of public art and festivals contribute to the “funky” and “eclectic” character. Public art and design has played a large role in shaping the city’s identity and is appreciated by residents and visitors alike. Public art displays in Hermosa Beach often help to share the rich cultural history of the town in the form of sculptures, murals, and placards or informational displays. These more permanent and highly visible displays - such as the many murals adorning previously blank walls throughout Downtown - contribute to the beautification and aesthetic value of the community and are the result of cooperation, dedication, and commitment from many volunteers, donors, and community groups” (PLAN Hermosa Pg. 69).

“The Hermosa Beach Murals Project uses the professional work of talented artists to beautify buildings throughout the city. Murals displaying Hermosa Beach’s rich history and beach culture are showcased bringing community members and visitors from all around to see them. The murals have become a destination point in the city and have educated the community while preserving its unique charm” (PLAN Hermosa Pg. 69).

Environmental Analysis:

The proposed display is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(a), because the display will be painted directly onto the west wall of the existing building, and will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

Conclusion:

Staff finds the display is a mural because it does not directly advertise products or goods offered on the premises, but instead depicts the City's counterculture, and enhances the pedestrian realm of the Downtown streetscapes through provision of arts.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt the attached resolution and determine that the proposed display is a mural and that it be allowed to exceed standards for total sign area and wall coverage pursuant to HBMC Sections 17.50.130.D.1. and 17.50.130.D.4., and determine that the proposed display is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Attachments:

1. Proposed Resolution
2. Applicant Submittal
3. Notice Poster Verification

Respectfully Submitted by: Nicole Ellis, Associate Planner

Approved: Ken Robertson, Community Development Director