

**City of Port Townsend  
DESIGN GUIDELINES  
for  
MURALS  
in the  
Special Overlay Design Review &  
National Landmark Historic Districts**

**PURPOSE**

These Design Guidelines are established for the following purposes:

1. To supplement land use regulations which encourage and promote public health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Port Townsend.
2. To provide guidance to urban design decisions that will promote development of high environmental and visual quality throughout the City.
3. To assist applicants in the preparation of development applications.
4. To assist decision-making by the Historic Preservation Committee in the review of development applications.

**INTRODUCTION**

The design guidelines for murals in the commercial areas of the Port Townsend National Landmark Historic District and in the Special Overlay Design Review District are intended to be used as an aid to appropriate design and not as a checklist for compliance. The purpose of the guidelines is to create awareness of the unique character of the District during the design of murals. These guidelines identify the design elements deemed important in reviewing murals for appropriateness and are the basis for decisions made by the Historic Preservation Committee.

**DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of these guidelines, the following definitions shall apply:

**Mural Signs** are wall signs containing advertising, which consist exclusively of paint applied to the wall of a building without application of any other material or framing. The Port Townsend Municipal Code 17.08 defines advertising as: any display of letters, numerals, characters, words, symbols, emblems, illustrations, objects, or registered trademarks which serve to call to the attention of the public products, services, businesses, buildings, premises, events, candidates, or ballot propositions.

**Artistic Murals** consist exclusively of paint applied to the wall of a building without application of any other material or framing, and which contain no advertising.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **I. MURAL SIGN GUIDELINES**

#### **A. New Mural Signs on Unpainted Surfaces:**

No new mural signs shall be permitted on unpainted brick, unpainted and painted stone, wood sidings with surface detail (i.e., bevel siding or board and batten siding, etc.) or any other material which does not have a flat planar character.

#### **B. New Mural Signs on Other Surfaces:**

New mural signs on surfaces other than those identified above in Item A shall meet the following criteria.

1. Mural signs shall be designed to complement the architectural and historic Character of the Historic District.
2. Mural signs shall not interrupt detract, or overwhelm the historic architectural features of the building. Rather, they shall comply with the guidelines below:
  - a. Mural signs shall not be located only on planar or flat surfaces of buildings and shall not overlap architectural features such as cornices, beams, columns, trim, windows, doors, vents, control joints in plaster, etc.
  - b. Mural signs shall reinforce the size, shape and proportions of building features such as column bays, window proportions and placement, planar wall proportions, etc.
  - c. Mural signs shall be placed within column bays, windows, planar walls, etc. so as to have a minimum border separation of 25% of the shortest mural dimension from architectural features.
  - d. Mural signs shall be laid out parallel and orthogonal (at a right angle) to the buildings architectural elements such as columns, beams, trim, cornices, parapets, etc.
  - e. Mural signs shall be laid out or composed within the building's architectural framework to reinforce a sense of balance of the overall mural/architectural composition.
3. Mural signs shall not be located on the primary street façade of buildings.
  - a. For buildings located on corners, murals shall not be located on the primary street façade but may be located on the secondary street façade provided the murals conform with the other requirements of these guidelines.
4. Mural signs shall not exceed 60 square feet in area. Exception: Where large expansive planar walls over 2,000 square feet in uninterrupted area occur, larger murals may be permitted provided they meet other mural sign guidelines and

provided that the murals do not overwhelm the size, scale, design and historic integrity of the building as determined by the Historic Preservation Commission.

5. Murals shall be located, designed, and proportioned to reinforce the building façade proportions and to reinforce the vertical nature of the district.
6. Colors shall be drawn from the Port Townsend National Landmark Historic District Approved Color Palette; other colors must be approved by the Historic Preservation Committee.
7. Applicants shall demonstrate that preparation, priming and finish painting materials shall not damage the surface of the building and that the finished application shall not lead to the surface deteriorating in an accelerated fashion over time.
8. New mural signs shall not be painted over “Historic” murals.
9. New mural signs shall protect the historical significance of the district by making a visual distinction between old and new murals; new murals shall reflect the late 19<sup>th</sup> century period without imitating it and applying the following:
  - a. Since the historic murals primarily emphasize lettering with simple trademarks, new murals shall be simple in nature and direct in approach with a complimentary emphasis on lettering and simple trademarks without copying historic images.
  - b. New murals shall have simple, rectangular fields, which contain all lettering, trademarks, and imagery. Borders or implied borders are suggested to reinforce the containment of images within the mural and minimize the impact on the architectural character of the building.

### **C. Repainting Existing Recent Murals**

1. Recent murals are those believed to have been painted within the last 50 years and are in existence on December 31, 1992. Recent murals include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Tree of Heaven, Mount Baker Block (Artistic Mural)
  - b. Children’s Mural, Police Station (Artistic Mural)
  - c. Lizzie’s, Hastings Building (Mural Sign)
  - d. Holly’s Flowers, McCurdy Building (Mural Sign)
  - e. Port Townsend Athletic Club, 229 Monroe (Mural Sign)
  - f. Mary Kaiser Design, 807 Washington (Artistic Mural)
  - g. Abundant Life Seed Foundation, 1029 Lawrence (Mural Sign)
  - h. The Gym, 1530 Franklin (Mural Sign)
  - i. Cinammon’s Apparel, 1005 Water (Mural Sign)
  - j. R & D – PT Paint, 215 Decatur St. (Mural Sign)
  - k. PT Outdoors, 1001 Water Street (Mural Sign)
  - l. Cheeks Bistro-1001 Water Street (Mural Sign)

2. Existing recent mural signs may be repainted with Historic Preservation Committee review if the applicant can show that repainting would not likely accelerate deterioration of the brick.

#### **D. Abandoned Mural Signs**

1. Recent and new mural signs, which become abandoned, shall be allowed to remain until such time as a new mural is approved for the site.

#### **E. Historic Murals**

1. No existing murals other than those listed under paragraph C(1) above, may be repainted, painted out, removed or otherwise disturbed or altered, except where structural integrity of the building is at stake.
2. Historic Preservation Committee review of the restoration of historic murals.
3. If the building is repainted, it must be done in a way that follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. After repainting, new grout should be painted to match the color and surface quality of the existing sign.
4. Prior to tuck pointing, photographic documentation of the historic signs shall be undertaken. Photographs shall be taken by a professional photographer using a large format camera (not 35 mm) at as near straight-on-view as possible. The photographs (at least four 8 x 8 inch color prints) shall be provided to the Historic Preservation Committee.
5. Historic photographic documentation of the signs (if any) shall also be collected and chronicled and made available to the Historic Preservation Committee upon request.

## **II. ARTISTIC MURALS**

Further discussion of artistic mural guidelines is postponed until after April, 1993, so the Historic Preservation Committee may further research the subject.

Adopted this 26<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1993.

/s/ Mike Yawman, Chair

Adopted by Ordinance 2871  
November 29, 2004

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Director, PCD

