

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: JULY 14, 2022
TO: ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION
FROM: ROCHELLE BRANCH, CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIVISION MANAGER
SUBJECT: 350 CORDOVA STREET – EUCLID CORDOVA ASSOCIATES
REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ARTIST AND CONCEPT ART PLAN

Application for Preliminary Consultation: March 8, 2019
Concept Design Review: May 10, 2022

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Arts & Culture Commission:

- 1) Approve the proposed artist Elena Manferdini;
- 2) Find that the proposed art concept of a site-responsive artwork—featuring a series of custom ceramic tile mosaic panels—and that the proposed artist comply with the goals, objectives and eligible criteria outlined in the City's Private Development Public Art Guidelines as follows:
 - a) The proposed artist currently works in the public realm, has demonstrated past experience and proven technical and aesthetic ability to successfully create artwork responsive to the site and community;
 - b) The proposed artist is of high artistic merit, sensitive to the City's aesthetic diversity and can contribute to the characteristics, contribution, aspirations and unique expressions of Pasadena's values;
 - c) The proposed artwork encourages public dialogue and interaction with art in public places;
 - d) The proposed artwork supports the inclusion of a broad range of works of art, reflective of the overall diversity of current works in the field of public art; and
 - e) The proposed artwork supports a public art collection composed of artworks of varied genres, styles, scales, media, form and intent, and reflects trends and disciplines in art on a local, regional, national and international arts level.

- 3) Approve the proposed art concept of a site-responsive artwork, featuring a series of colorful custom mosaic panels, with the following considerations:
- a) The artwork shall be appropriately lighted and the applicant shall submit a Final Lighting Plan, including Lighting Field Test results to be reviewed and approved by Cultural Affairs Staff for Final Signoff;
 - b) The artwork shall remain publicly accessible during normal business hours without enclosure;
 - c) The artwork shall be sited without interference from commercial signage;
 - d) The developer shall submit structural plans for review by the City's Building and Safety Division to determine if a Building Permit is required;
 - e) The construction budget (materials and labor) for required elements that will be replaced by approved public artwork must be integrated within the public art budget;
 - f) The Arts and Culture Commission shall conduct a Final Art Plan review that will contain a detailed public art budget, Final Art Plan narrative with the selected artist's fully developed concept, refined visual materials with dimensions and true to scale rendering of the artwork as it would appear in situ (via a maquette or digital simulation), and maintenance plan;
 - g) The final artwork shall be consistent with all aspects of the approved Final Art Plan. Any proposed alterations to the Final Art Plan must be submitted for advance staff review and approval. Those proposed changes to the Final Art Plan that are not approved at the staff level must be presented to the Arts and Culture Commission for review and approval;
 - h) Staff shall conduct a final site inspection after project installation for review and approval prior to issuance of any Certificate of Occupancy/Final Sign Off.
 - i) Staff shall review for compliance and approve all final documentation materials including a detailed budget showing all actual expenses for design, fabrication and installation; a detailed maintenance plan including product and application methods; a project documentation summary and photographs; and
 - j) The developer shall record the artwork maintenance stipulations in the OPA or DDA under covenants affecting real property at the time of installation to ensure ongoing, permanent maintenance of the artwork and provide documentation of such to Cultural Affairs Staff within a period of one year from the Final Sign Off date.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On May 10, 2022 the Design Commission approved the Concept Design for the 350 Cordova Street development (Euclid Cordova Associates). The development team wishes to commission an onsite public artwork for the multi-family residential development by proposed artist Elena Manferdini. The artist has proposed a site-responsive artwork featuring a series of custom ceramic tile mosaic panels within the courtyard garden at the north entrance of the

development. The artwork concept will consist of 10 vertical mosaic panels arranged across three levels of the pedestrian bridge that connects two of the main buildings. The artist's design is intended to complement both the natural landscaping and man-made architectural elements of the site by creating an immersive field of view across the building's façade, bisecting the two adjacent courtyard gardens. When viewed together, the panels will depict a life-size red and orange tree through a grid of brightly-colored ceramic tiles. The overall effect produces an image that is both abstract and representational in nature. This immersive and site-responsive artwork would create a meaningful sense of place, positively contribute to the experience of residents and visitor and make a significant contribution to the City's Public Art Collection.

BACKGROUND:

Site

The 350 Cordova Street development comprises a 1.3-acre lot at the southwest corner of Cordova Street and S. Euclid Avenue and is currently developed with a non-historic complex of one-story medical office buildings built in 1977. Located in the former Downtown Redevelopment area and the Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential District, the project is a \$14 million, 88,000 square foot residential development. The project involves construction of four three-to-four-story buildings with a total of 86-units over one level of subterranean parking. Of the 86-units, 13 are designated as affordable units. The buildings are arranged in two rows running north-to-south with a long open courtyard and garden between them. A tree inventory provided with the application identifies 58 trees on site, nine of which are protected native trees and 11 of which are protected specimen trees, as well as five street trees and 17 off-site trees in close proximity to the public art project site.

Contextually, the 350 Cordova Street project is intended to respond to the revitalized, contemporary vision for Pasadena's Central District, which makes downtown housing a crucial component to the realization of a vibrant new urban core with a thriving, walkable metropolitan center.

Artist Selection Process

Public art consultant Beatrix Barker was hired by the developer to create the project's Public Art Goals help guide the artist selection process. These project goals include:

- To enhance and reinforce the project's goals and vision for use and identity
- To activate the semi-private courtyard garden
- To connect the project to the neighborhood and community
- To resonate with the overall goals and purposes of the City's Public Art Program

Several artists working in diverse media were identified and invited to propose for the project.

After careful consideration, artist Elena Manferdini was selected for the project because of her understanding of architectural design, engineering and fabricating capabilities, thorough research of the site and community, and awareness of Pasadena's Public Art Master Plan and Private Development Guidelines.

ART CONCEPT:

Titled *Tableau Vivant*, French for “living picture”, the proposed artwork draws inspiration from aspects of theatrical design in which a silent and motionless actors occupy a static scene or image. With this influence in mind, the proposed artwork was conceived to function as an backdrop within the architectural space, creating a framing element for pedestrians and visitors to traverse through.

The proposed artwork includes a series of ten mosaic panels composed of brightly colored ceramic tiles set within a grid pattern. Measuring 4’ by 10’, each mosaic panel is constructed from custom 2” by 2” glazed ceramic tiles to form a large-scale image that bleeds across the architecture. When viewed as a whole, the panels collectively depict a vibrant life-size red and orange tree extending 30 ft. high. The arrangement of the tiles within a grid adds a pixelated quality to the subject that changes based on the distance and perspective of the viewer. The overall effect of this technique produces an image that is both abstract and representational in nature.

The artist’s design is intended to complement both the natural landscaping and manmade architectural elements of the site by creating an immersive field of view across the building’s façade, bisecting the two adjacent courtyard gardens.

Preliminary Budget

As a multi-family residential project with a building permit valuation greater than \$500,000 in the Downtown Old Pasadena Redevelopment area, the 350 Cordova Street Development meets the Public Art Requirement thresholds, as outlined in the City’s Private Development Public Art Guidelines.

Current Building Permit Valuation:	\$14,657,503
Art Fee Obligation 1%:	\$146,575
Public Art Deposit 25%:	\$36,643.75
Remaining 75% for Public Art:	\$109,931.25
On-Site Art Budget:	\$98,938.13
Public Art Consultant Fee 10%:	\$10,993.12

Site Responsiveness

The artwork site will be located at the north entryway of the development facing Cordova Street. The mosaic panels will be strategically arranged across the vertical façade of the multi-level pedestrian bridge, intersecting the architecture and landscape of the development.

As part of the tree protection plan, six protected specimen trees and ten non-protected trees are proposed to remain at the site including an olive tree in the middle of the main garden and two pine trees in front of the primary artwork location. With this awareness of the existing trees and garden spaces throughout the development, the proposed artwork will visually complement the natural and manmade elements of the development and add a new visual layer for visitors to experience.

Creating identity and acting as a visual focal point, the proposed artwork will have daytime and evening presence and will be visible to pedestrians and drivers alike.

Mosaic Panels

The ten mosaic panels that will occupy the pedestrian bridge will each measure 10 ft. high and 4 ft. wide, for a total of 40 sq.ft of mosaic space per panel. Each panel will be trimmed in a metal frame with white siding and will be properly anchored to the building structure following engineering and safety standards.

Using a series of custom square ceramic tiles measuring 2 in. by 2 in., the artist has carefully mapped the layout of the mosaic panels using ten colors across a grid pattern to create the final image. The final artwork will include a total of 400 sq.ft of mosaic space constructed from 14,400 tiles.

Artist Background

Elena Manferdini is an Italian artist and architect based in Venice, California, and is the principal and owner of Atelier Manferdini, established in 2004.

Manferdini graduated from the University of Civil Engineering in Bologna, Italy and later received her Masters of Architecture and Urban Design from the University of California Los Angeles. Her diverse body of work including public art, architecture, design, and fine art, has been exhibited in both architecture and art museums across the United States, Europe and Asia. Manferdini received the 2019 ICON Award as part of the LA Design Festival which recognizes iconic women who have made an indelible mark on Los Angeles, culture, and society through their work, character, and creative leadership. In 2016, she was awarded the PAN (Public Art Network) Award for Best Public Art Project in North America.

Manferdini is an experienced and competent professional in the field of public art and is well-prepared to deliver a successful new artwork as part of Pasadena's Public Art Program Collection.

Maintenance

Regular dust mopping, sweeping, or vacuuming is recommended prior to cleaning with liquid products. Glazed tile products should be cleaned routinely with an all-purpose, low VOC, household or commercial cleaner. The product chosen should also be grout joint cleaning compatible. A multipurpose spray cleaner, which removes water deposits and mildew designed for everyday use can be used. A cotton mop, cloth, sponge, or non-metallic brush should be used to apply and agitate cleaner. Rinse the area with clean water and dry thoroughly. Routine cleaners should never contain harsh chemicals as these can damage tile. Acids can damage grout and the glazed surface of the tile.

Grout needs to be cleaned on a periodic basis to remove any surface buildup. Grout darkens over time so it is recommended that it be sealed regularly to preserve and protect it. Routine grout cleaning can be done with a concentrated household or commercial cleaner depending on the application. When heavy-duty grout cleaning is required, you will need to use a professional strength tile and grout cleaner that is capable of removing grease, mildew stains, algae, and

synthetic or acrylic waxes from the grout joints. However, such a product should contain non-polluting chemicals and low VOC levels. Ammonia should not be used as it can discolor grout. Grout can be stained to normalize the color of older grout if necessary.

The artist will be required to submit a Maintenance Plan to Cultural Affairs Staff for Final Sign Off of the project.

Conservation

If the artist is not available to complete unforeseen conservation work, a professional art conservator should be consulted to execute any necessary repairs.

CONCLUSION

Staff finds that the proposed artist, Elena Manferdini, has demonstrated the ability to implement a thought-provoking, site-responsive artwork that would create a meaningful sense of place at the site and make a positive contribution to the City's Public Art Program. The project has the capacity to provide an engaging experience for residents and visitors, with a playful aesthetic that would complement the building's design and surrounding landscape.

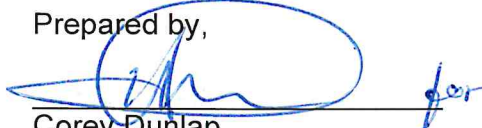
The proposed artwork is consistent with the Public Art Guidelines that are intended to "create a more unique and human city, engage our citizens and visitors, and enhance the built urban environment." Per the Guidelines, the proposed public art project by Elena Manferdini is "responsive to the site and community" and can contribute to the characteristics, aspirations and distinctive expressions of Pasadena. In addition, the project is in alignment with the Public Art Master Plan which supports the incorporation and integration of civic art into private development to enhance community character, reinforce local identity, highlight qualities of place and assist visitor orientation.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rochelle Branch
Cultural Affairs Division Manager

Prepared by,



Corey Dunlap
Public Art Coordinator

Attachment A – Elena Manferdini Concept Art Plan