



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council
Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232

Staff Report

File #: 21-386, **Version:** 1

Item #: A-1.

CAC - Consideration of a New Permanent Art Concept by Alex Prager Toward Fulfillment of the City's Art in Public Places Program Requirement for a Project at 8888 Washington Boulevard

Meeting Date: October 20, 2020

Contact Person/Dept: B. Christine Byers / Administrative Services - Cultural Affairs

Phone Number: (310) 253-6003

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☐

Public Hearing: ☐

Action Item: ☒

Attachments: ☒

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - Cultural Affairs Commission (10/15/20).

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (10/15/20); Serena Wright-Black, Assistant City Manager (10/13/20)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC) consider the information provided, together with the recommendation of the CAC Public Art Subcommittee, and approve Alex Prager's art concept toward fulfillment of Culver City's Art in Public Places Program (APPP) requirement for a new development project at 8888 Washington Boulevard.

BACKGROUND

Runyon Group (Runyon) is the developer and applicant of a new project located at 8888 Washington Blvd. (just east of Platform). The project is designed by Culver City-based Abramson Architects and comprises a 4-story building with approx. 70,000 sq. ft. office, retail, and restaurant space, plus a three-level automated subterranean parking structure. The project is scheduled to be completed early 2021.

Pursuant to CCMC Section 15.06.120, new commercial development projects with a building valuation of \$500,000 or more and remodeling projects (tenant improvements) with a building valuation of \$250,000 or more are subject to the City's Art in Public Places Program (APPP) requirement. The minimum 1% APPP allocation that Runyon is required to fulfill for 8888 Washington

Blvd. is \$124,130. This amount is based on the 1% APPP allocation associated with two Building Permits: B19-0416 and B19-0472.

DISCUSSION

Runyon hired Bianca Collins to serve as art consultant for the project which included facilitating artist selection. Ms. Collins is currently Curator of Public Programs at The Fowler Museum, a columnist for *Artillery Magazine* and formerly served as Editor of KCRW's *Art Talk*. She also has art gallery experience and is currently working on an art installation project for Coachella 2022. Ms. Collins is dedicated to representing and amplifying female and minority artists' voices through her work and this project for Runyon is her first permanent public art commission.

Two rounds of diverse artists were presented to Runyon, totaling 48 candidates across 2D and 3D media. Of the final 13 artists invited to submit proposals, 6 chose to participate: Annie Lapin, Paige Smith, Friends With You, Lilian Martinez, Meg Cranston, and Alex Prager.

Los Angeles based artist Alex Prager (www.alexprager.com <<http://www.alexprager.com>>) was selected for this project in part because her concept was both impactful and compatible with the site and also because her background as photographer and filmmaker aligned with Culver City's long-standing association with film entertainment. Ms. Prager creates elaborately staged scenes that draw inspiration from a wide range of influences and references, including Hollywood cinema, experimental films, popular culture, and street photography. She deliberately casts and stages all of her works, merging past and contemporary sources, to create a sense of ambiguity. Each photograph captures a moment frozen in time, inviting the viewer to "complete the story" and speculate about its narrative context.

Alex Prager's concept for 8888 Washington Blvd. is based on two source images created in 2015 (*See's Candies, Payless, Supercuts 1* and *See's Candies, Payless, Supercuts 2*) that will be enlarged and mounted to two walls on either side of a porte-cochère which partially covers a driveway connecting Washington Blvd. to the parking structure. This will be the first time both images are installed permanently at a large scale (approx. 42' x 13' and 50' x 14'), and framing a space that will be accessed by both pedestrians and vehicles.

The art concept was first presented to the CAC Public Art Subcommittee (Commissioners Pali and Williams) on June 29, 2020. The subcommittee supported the general concept but expressed concerns with regard to choice of materials, installation, and lighting from the perspective of showcasing the work to its best advantage, durability, maintenance and visibility. It was agreed by all present at the June meeting that Commissioner Pali would continue to work with staff and the developer's team to address these concerns, and once resolved, the concept would be brought forward to the full CAC for consideration. Per the last meeting with Commissioner Pali on October 2, 2020, the concerns originally expressed in June had been adequately addressed.

As included in the attached art plan, the artwork installation will comprise printing Alex Prager's images on a 3M vinyl in 48" wide sections, and finishing each section with a matte anti-graffiti overlamine. The vinyl sections will be affixed (with an overlapping edge) directly to the smooth wall surface. A protective ½" wide black anodized U channel aluminum frame will cover the top, bottom and outer side edges of each mural. Because of the location of each wall, a sun-shade study

(attached) shows that the murals will receive little to almost no direct sunlight which on the one hand, helps extend the life of the image and vinyl but also poses a challenge with regard to overall visibility of the art. To address this, the developer will be installing artificial lighting on both sides of the porte-cochère in addition to the downlights already planned for that space. It was agreed at the last meeting that approval of the concept by the CAC would be conditioned on the developer making any necessary adjustments to the lighting to ensure that the art is properly illuminated and meets the City's visibility/accessibility requirement (10 hrs./day, 7 days/week). Additionally, per the manufacturer, the 3M vinyl has a lifespan of about 7 years. Since permanent artworks are expected to remain in situ for 20 years or more, the developer has acknowledged that barring any other damage (e.g., from impact), Runyon is prepared to replace the vinyl in its entirety at regular intervals to maintain both the integrity of the artwork.

The attached art plan includes a budget of \$125,671 which covers the artist's fee, fabrication, and installation. Williams Art Conservation is reviewing the materials and maintenance plan for this artwork and a final report will be submitted to staff prior to commencing fabrication.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The cost for design, fabrication and installation for this project is borne entirely by the applicant. The responsibility and cost for future maintenance and restoration of the artwork is the responsibility of the property owner pursuant to Section 15.06.150 of the CCMC. There are, however, City staff costs associated with project coordination, preparation of a covenant, other documentation and outreach materials.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 20-10-20_ATT_Art Plan for 8888 Washington Blvd.

MOTION

That the Cultural Affairs Commission:

1. Approve an art concept by Alex Prager toward fulfillment of the APPP requirement for 8888 Washington Blvd; and,
2. That the applicant be required to make any necessary adjustments to the lighting as may be deemed necessary by staff and/or the CAC Public Art Subcommittee prior to receiving Certificate of Occupancy.