



Commemorative Works Committee Action

March 1, 2022

PROJECT	Relief Sculpture Bust to the Memory of Huseyn Javid United State-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce 1212 Potomac Street NW Washington, DC 20007
SUBMITTED BY	Azerbaijani Women of America
REVIEW AUTHORITY	Recommendation to Mayor and District Council
ACTION TAKEN	Recommend Approval

The Commemorative Works Committee (Committee) considered at its January 21, 2022, meeting the proposed sculpture of Huseyn Javid in front of the United State-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce at 1212 Potomac Street NW and recommends the Mayor and District Council approve this commemorative work.

Background

The Azerbaijani Women of America (AWA) - a non-profit organization with a mission to preserve Azerbaijani culture and heritage among Azerbaijani-Americans, bring awareness and establishing long-lasting relations between the United States and Azerbaijan through education and enlightenment, as well as connecting and enriching community members - is proposing the bust of Huseyn Javid in public space controlled by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). Javid was a prominent Azerbaijani poet, and the sculpture symbolizes the fight of Azerbaijani people for freedom and its strong stance against any form of discrimination. The commemorative work is proposed to be attached to the building's east facade and extend into public space adjacent to the US-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce. The sculpture was also reviewed by the Public Space Committee and the Historic Preservation Office and Old Georgetown Board due to its location in public space and in the Georgetown Historic District. The sculpture of Javid has a total height of 2.1', total width of 1.65', and extends into public space .5'. It is made of bronze, includes a decorative scroll and inscription, and depicts Javid at 1.5 human scale.

There is a strong connection between the commemorative work and its location. It is located on the façade of the US-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce and Javid was a founder of progressive romanticism in contemporary Azerbaijani literature and a strong opponent of the repressive totalitarian Soviet regime.



Assessment of the Application

Location and Relationship to the Subject Matter

The proposed site is appropriate considering the subject and use of the adjacent building:

- The Draft Commemorative Work Location Strategy does consider using sidewalks and landscaped “public parking” as potential locations for commemorative works, although this specific location is not identified because of the narrowness of the street and “public parking;”
- There is a direct connection between subject and the site - a native of Azerbaijan and the US-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce;
- There are no other commemorative works in the immediate area surrounding the proposed commemorative work, the closest being the Francis Scott Key Memorial three blocks to the west at the southwest corner of M Street and the Francis Scott Key Bridge; and,
- The commemorative work’s location next to the building’s main entrance places it close to the sidewalk where it is visually accessible but entirely out of the pedestrian sidewalk.

The small scale and size of the sculpture complements the residential scale of the historic two-story townhouses, more recently constructed four-story buildings along the street, and the narrow 60’ width of Potomac Street. The three feet of landscaping adjacent to the building creates a narrow green and park-like space that defines a protected area of the public space that the sculpture extends into. Additional graphics showing the installation of the commemorative work verify the size and scale of the commemorative work is appropriate for its proposed location.

Proposed Work’s Compatibility with District Policies and Values

The proposed commemorative work appears to be consistent with District policies and values:

- Review of the commemorative work is being coordinated with the US Commission of Fine Arts and located in an area outside of the Monumental Core, two policies specified in the Comprehensive Plan;
- The subject appears to be consistent with values defined in the final report of Mayor Bowser’s District of Columbia Facilities and Commemorative Expressions (DCFACES) Working Group that emphasized discouraging subjects that participated in slavery, systemic racism, mistreatment of, or actions that suppressed equality for, persons of color, women and LGBTQ communities and violation of the DC Human Rights Act;
- The subject is a native of Azerbaijan and consistent with the District’s goals to encourage commemorative works that represent a diversity of culture, race, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability status; and,
- The size and scale of the commemorative work is appropriate for the MU-4 zone - a mixed use zone that permits moderate density mixed-use development – where it is located.

Materials Used in the Commemorative Work

The materials proposed for the commemorative work are durable and appropriate for the subject. The sculpture is bronze, will have a natural finish, and will be treated to give it a darker patina. Bronze is a material historically used for outdoor sculptures because of its durability.

Sponsor's Ability to Fund and Maintain the Commemorative Works

The total cost to design, fabricate, and install the sculpture is \$9,000 and will be funded by the Azerbaijani Women of America. The US-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce has committed to maintaining the sculpture after installation.

Summary of Reviews by Other reviewing Agencies and Organizations

Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC2E) – The Advisory Neighborhood Commission provided no comments on the commemorative work application.

District Department of Transportation (DDOT) – The Public Space Committee approved the application with the condition that a letter of no objection be provided from the adjacent property owner. The Eton Condominium Owners Association representing the adjacent property owners have submitted a letter in support of the application stating that the condominium board and individual residents have no objection to the application.

National Capitol Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC) – The Chair of NCMAC reviewed the application, noted the commemorative work is not located in a park or other public or similarly prominent space, and concluded that given its placement no further review by the Commission is necessary.

Historic Preservation Office – The Historic Preservation Office staff reviewed and stated no objection to the application.

Old Georgetown Board/Commission of Fine Arts – The Old Georgetown Board/Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the application at their September 16, 2021, meeting and had no objection.

Commemorative Works Committee Recommendation

The Commemorative Works Committee recommends the Mayor and District Council approve the bust of Huseyn Javid at 1212 Potomac Street NW.