

Public Art Policy and Guidelines for the Installation of Public Art on the Outside of Brookline Public Schools

Overview

The Brookline Public School Department (BPS), values the role of art in enhancing the quality of life in the community, strengthening civic identity and cultural heritage, creating an attractive environment, and bringing enjoyment to residents of all ages. They also recognize the interest of students, residents and community groups in displaying art, objects of historical significance, and other items in or on Brookline public school buildings and welcomes such forms of civic participation. Public art can spark conversations, unite and energize us, and empower and inspire our community.

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline the standards and procedures for reviewing, selection, installation and care of public art and temporary art exhibit proposals for installation on Brookline Public School buildings. These guidelines are necessary to ensure that art installations complement and respect the character of the town, and the school buildings, and are appropriate to their settings, history, and traditions, and do not impose unexpected or insupportable burdens on the School Department, or Town, such as a frequent need for maintenance and repair, or high, ongoing security costs.

This policy does not address the acquisition by the BPS department, through gift or purchase, of works of art or of other objects, or the inclusion of art to be installed inside school buildings.

Scope

For purposes of these guidelines, “art” means works or objects owned by the BPS department, or works or objects owned by others but displayed on school properties on a temporary or permanent basis, including, but not limited to, two and three dimensional works of art such as paintings, murals, drawings, photographs, graphics, fabric art, collages, ceramics and sculptures, and objects of historic significance. For the purposes of these guidelines, “curatorial responsibility” means tasks related to the selection and exhibition of art, and other matters relating to the display of art, including responsibility for designating outdoor spaces for the display of art, and ensuring the art is visible to the public.

Selection Criteria and Procedures

A selection committee for each school public art project will consist of the following:

1. Two Brookline Commission for the Arts members.
2. Two School Committee members.
3. One student.
4. The school principal.
5. One business or community member to be selected by the principal.

The selection committee will make decisions on whether or not to approve a display or exhibit based on appropriate quality, scale, and content to be shown on a public school building open to patrons of any age, race, religion, and ethnicity, and shall not discriminate on the basis of message or viewpoint but

may discriminate on the basis of perceived aesthetic or historical value, or other criteria unrelated to any viewpoint. To be eligible for selections, items must be in stable condition and suitable for hanging or for display otherwise, shall not require extraordinary procedures or equipment for maintenance or display, and shall not have the potential to create unsafe conditions as determined by the Building Commissioner and/or Commissioner of Public Works, as appropriate.

These guidelines require that the selection committee consider all criteria set forth in this policy in its review of proposed public art for the installation on the outside of Brookline public schools, and specifically:

- a. Artistic excellence/quality of artwork and craftsmanship,
- b. Relationship of artwork to site,
- c. Maintenance provisions,
- d. Durability, public safety and the degree of public contact and,

In light of laws applicable to public buildings, the following types of items shall not be selected or approved for display: (i) items that (a) promote political fundraising within the meaning of Mass. Gen. Laws. Ch. 55, or that (b) promote or oppose a matter placed, or to be placed, before voters at the polls or that otherwise promote a political campaign purpose within the meaning of Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 55; and (ii) items that endorse religion or any particular religion, or opposition to religion or to any particular religion.

In addition, items selected or approved for display shall be appropriate for a general audience of all ages. Accordingly, the delegated entity shall not select for display art that a reasonably prudent person applying contemporary community standards would find offensive, including the following: (i) items that contain material that, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interests or depicts or describes nudity or sexual conduct in an offensive or prurient manner; (ii) items that contain material depicting graphic violence, including, but not limited to, (a) the depiction of human or animal bodies or body parts in states of mutilation, dismemberment, decomposition, or disfigurement, and (b) the depiction of weapons or other implements of devices being used in an act or acts of violence or harm on a person or animal.

Appearance, Aesthetics and other Selection Criteria

The BPS department has an interest in ensuring the best possible appearance and aesthetic quality of their school buildings and selection decisions will be made accordingly. Public art installations will be of high quality related to style, appearance, durability and ease of maintenance. In addition public art selected for display on school buildings, should reflect the character of the Town and the buildings and shall be appropriate for a general audience of all ages. No public art element nor its manner of installation, shall substantially change the character of the school building or its intended use.

Applicants are encouraged to discuss tentative proposals and art ideas with the selection committee prior to the formal review process. Once the application is submitted the applicant should be prepared to present the following upon request:

- (a) Any technical issues related to materials, maintenance and care, repairs, and installation needs such as hanging arrangements, bases, pedestals, or footings needed or environmental

conditions (excessive shade, sunlight, or moisture) that might affect the art on its site location.

- (b) Photographs of the art or, if it is a proposed piece not yet fabricated, a design. If the piece is a sculpture meant to be viewed in the round, photographs of the design from more than one perspective are desirable.

Repair

The BPS department has an interest in ensuring that all public art elements remain in good repair and in ensuring that the short and long term repair costs are reasonable. Art elements must be of high quality using appropriate materials, to ensure a long life and resistance to the elements, wear and tear, or acts of vandalism.

Ownership

Unless a special condition is agreed to the contrary, all art installations are the property of the BPS department.

Upon selection of an artist, or artists, the selection committee will work with the town of Brookline legal department to create a contract between the town and the artist(s), for the installation of the public art.