

Staff Report

Date: April 15, 2016

To: Visual Arts Commissioners

From: Mary Chou, Project Manager

Re: Noe Valley Town Square Public Artwork

The artist team Wowhaus prepared two proposals for the new Noe Valley Town Square in response to feedback from the Visual Arts Committee (VAC) to create sculptures that are more playful and more identifiable as owl forms.

The concept of the two proposals remains the same – Garden Guardians. The artist’s description is provided below, followed by renderings of the two proposals. While two owls are shown in both proposals, the artists can incorporate a third similar form. The proposals will be sent out to the community for public comment, and a summary of the comments will be provided at the VAC meeting.

Artist’s description of Garden Guardians Concept:

“Garden Guardians” are a duo of engaging bronze sculptures that welcome visitors of all ages to the Noe Valley Town Square. Conceived as sentinels, or guardians of the park, the highly durable sculptures are sited in a circular island on the pathway that winds through the green space toward the back of the Square. An abstract 36” h. owl figure is flanked by a smaller 28” h. owl.

These sculptures will have a timeless, lovable presence in the community as pure sculpture and are also inviting to children, becoming the locus of imaginative play. Children will construct their own narratives as they play, inviting multiple visits to the park. The owls can be looked through, both framing a view and giving the impression of seeing through the eyes of another creature.

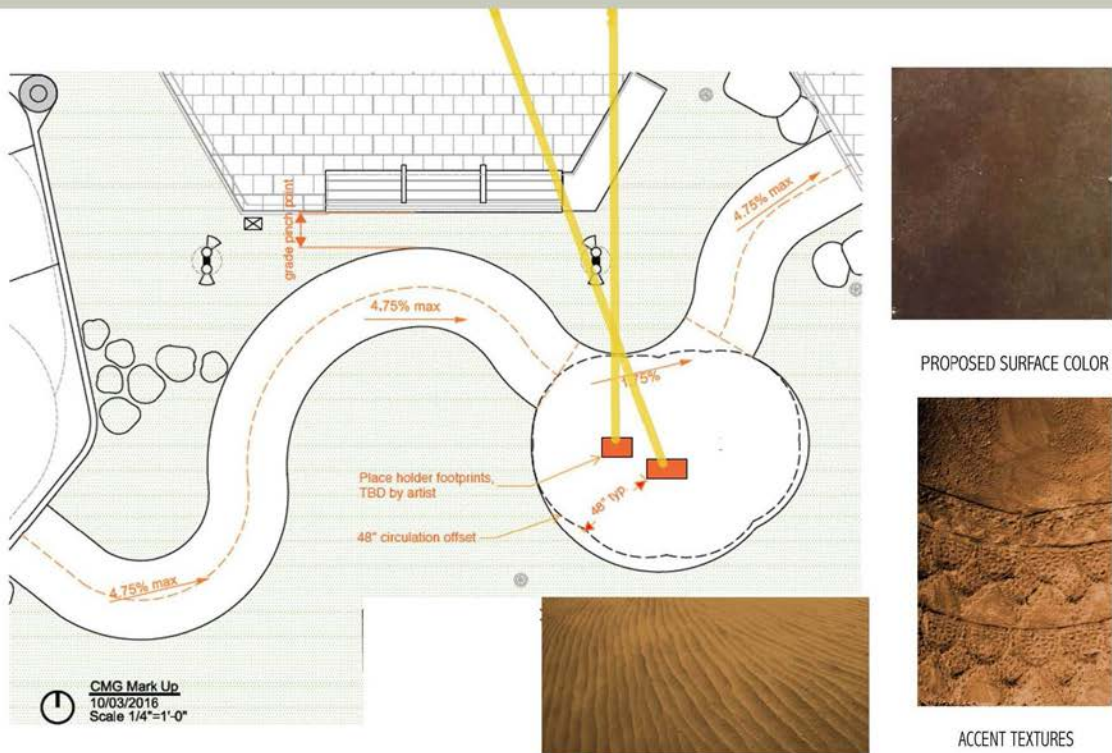
The larger owl, a father or mother, is darker in hue, while the smaller owl has a lighter toned patina. The patina of the sculptures will deepen with use and wear, gaining character over time; the naturalistic color palette of the sculptures complements the environs and will not clash with the two existing murals at the site.

From an environmental standpoint, owls are signs of a healthy ecosystem and warrant our attention. The owl is a symbol of the sky and night; it is also a symbol of wisdom, signaling dispersion of ignorance or darkness, encouraging ‘seeing through the eyes of others.’

Wowhaus has created permanent public art throughout the United States for close to 20 years, working in a wide range of durable exterior media. Commissions include “Sunnyside Menagerie”, a series of 23 small bronze sculptures integrated with plantings in San Francisco’s Sunnyside Conservatory, as well as “Abundance”, two large-scale mosaic fish sculptures at the Ortega Branch Public Library.

GARDEN GUARDIANS – Proposal 1:

The first proposal is a modification of their original proposal. The adjustments to the model include changes to the shape of the eyes, a change to the length of the beak, and more definition of the feet. The rendering is provided in a bronze color to closer resemble the completed sculpture. The proposed texture is shown as reference in the sample images below.



GARDEN GUARDIANS – Proposal 2:

The second proposal is a new design of the owls. The owls (larger approx. 36" high, smaller approx. 28" high) will be made of bronze and the texture will be simple, smooth and even, to complement the minimal more simplified form of the owl. The owls would be sited in the tot garden along the path.



Motion: Motion to approve the Conceptual Design, description TBD at meeting, by the artist team Wowhaus for the new Noe Valley Town Square.