



CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

**I**ndigenous  
**S**olidarity  
**W**orking  
**G**roup

## Indigenous Mural Concept Brief:

Joseph Sagaj, Artist

Anishinaabe - Ojibwe, Sturgeon Clan,  
Neskantaga First Nation, Northern Ontario

Submitted by:

Aylin Doyle, Exhibition Designer

Dawn Lee, Exhibit Graphic Designer

Stephen Allen, Chair, ISWG

Pamela Thomson

July 27, 2020





SITE STUDY - Mural Views



Avenue Rd. Side Elevation



Mural Wall



From Avenue Rd.



From ROM



From across the street



## SITE STUDY

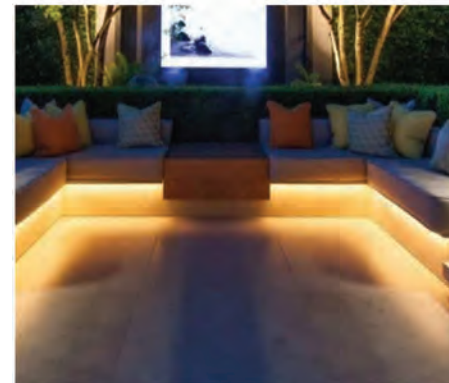
### Site Specifics

- Heavy shadow on sunny days
- Lamp posts in front
- Other street furniture obstruction
- Utilities on the mural wall (pipes, sprinklers etc.)
- Mural wall is in high traffic area
- Mural wall night time visibility is low
- Mural wall not visible from front

### Suggestions

- Colourful/bright design
- Edge lighting to illuminate the mural
- Durable weather resistant fabrication
- Utility assessment and relocation if possible
- Removal of the boxes in front next to bench
- Keep the bench for people to sit and enjoy the mural
- Possibility of a plaque on the front to explain the mural and the process

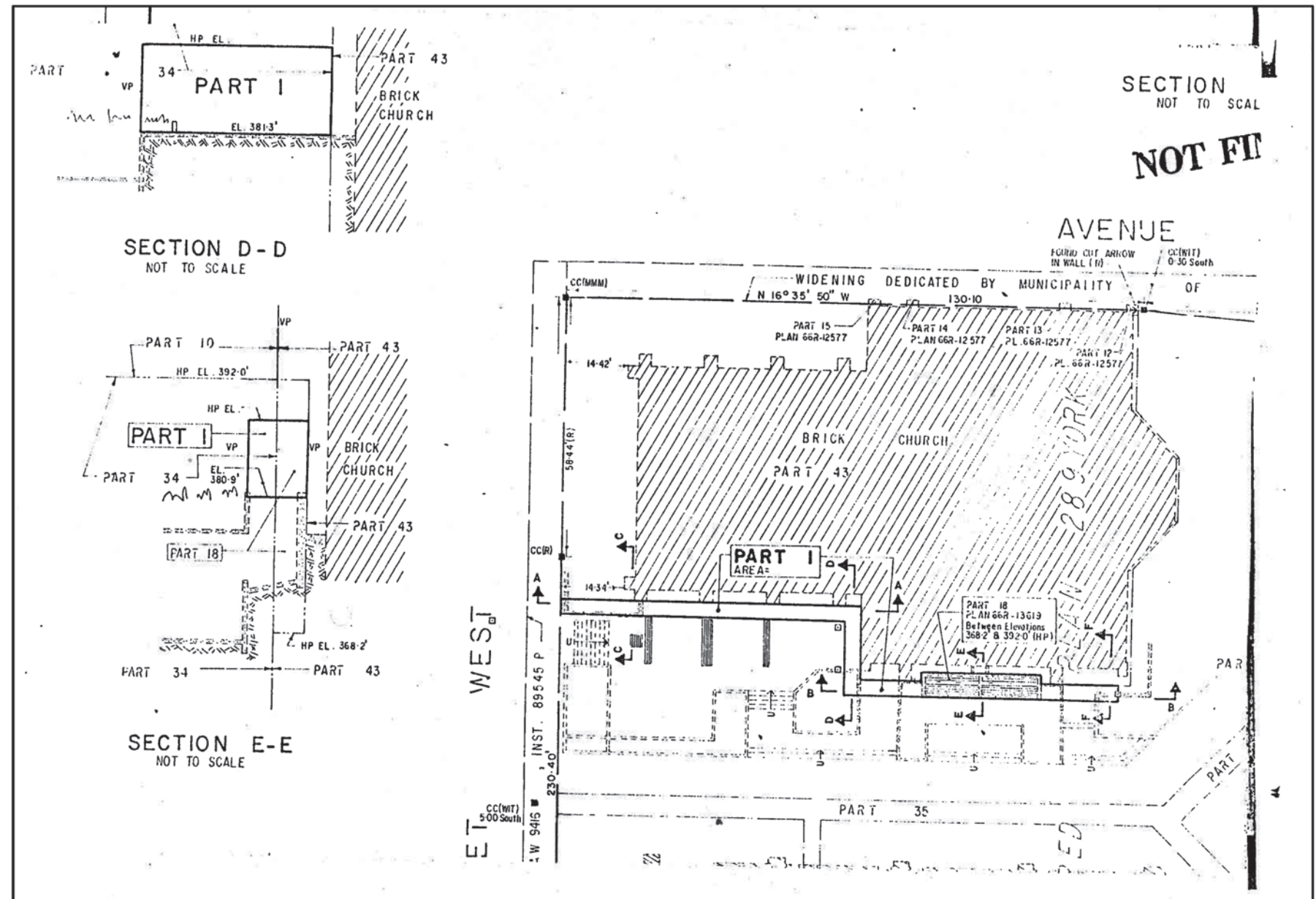
Edge Lighting Effects



Optional sign in proximity  
Mural name/date/info



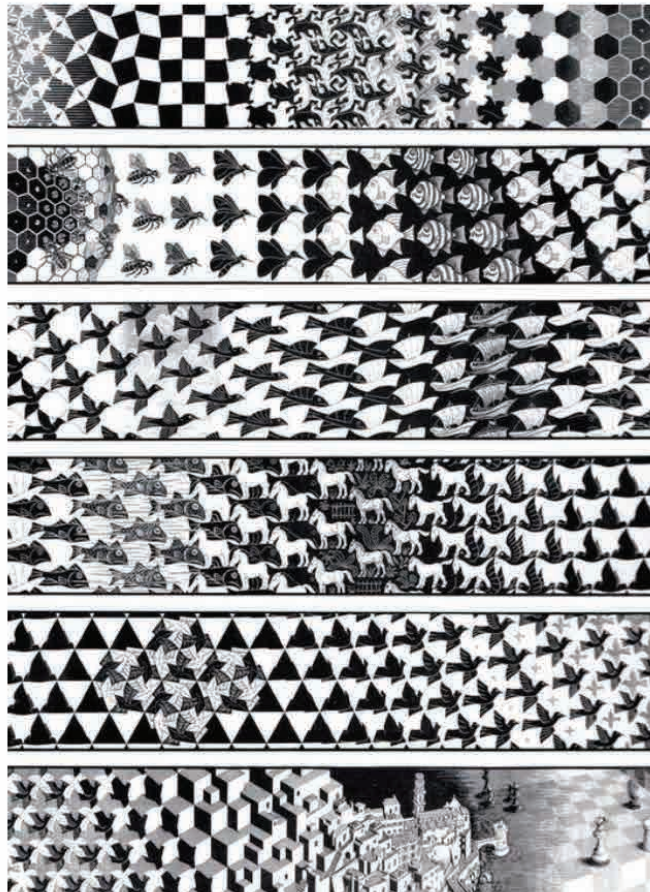
## SITE STUDY - SURVEY





# DESIGN CONCEPT OPTIONS

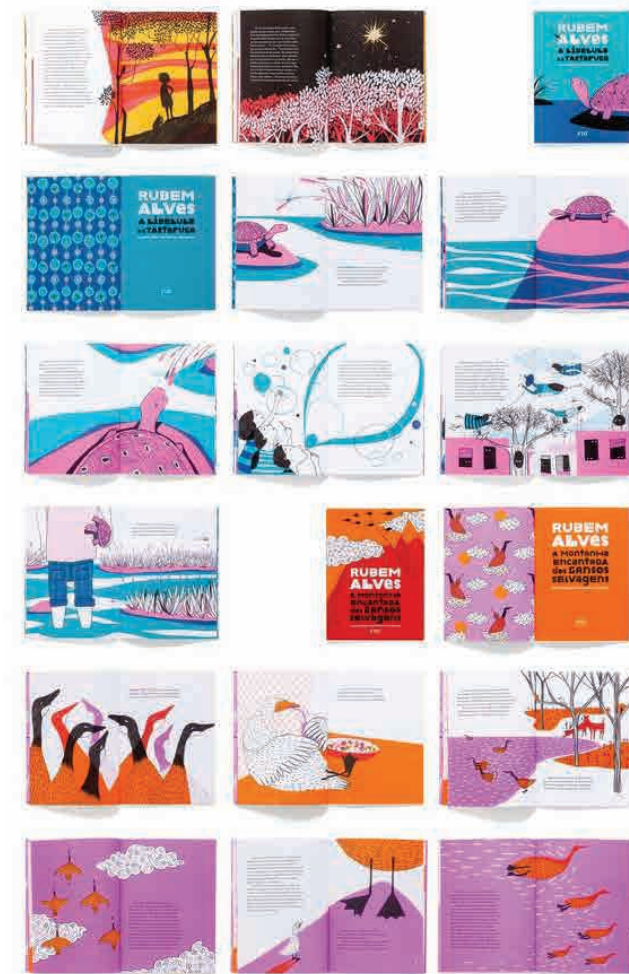
## Continuous Design



Attractive  
 Iconic  
 Makes a statement  
 Complete visibility from a distance  
 One main story with parts  
 No beginning - No end  
 Can be viewed from any direction

Attractive  
 Surprising  
 Book like  
 Creates curiosity  
 Visible  
 Motivates people to get close  
 One main or variety of stories

## Panel by Panel Design



CONCEPT 1  
Continuous Design

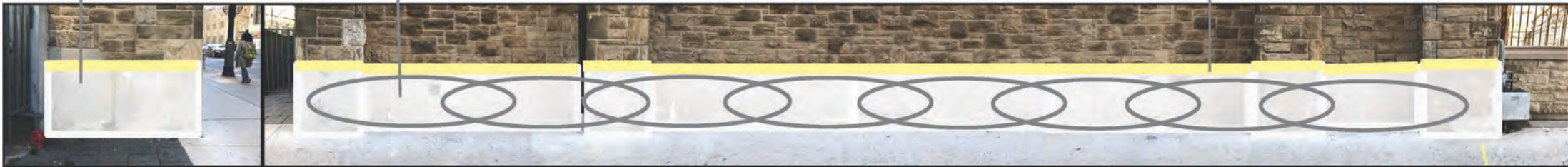


Avenue Rd. side elevation

Artist's Statement  
Back panel

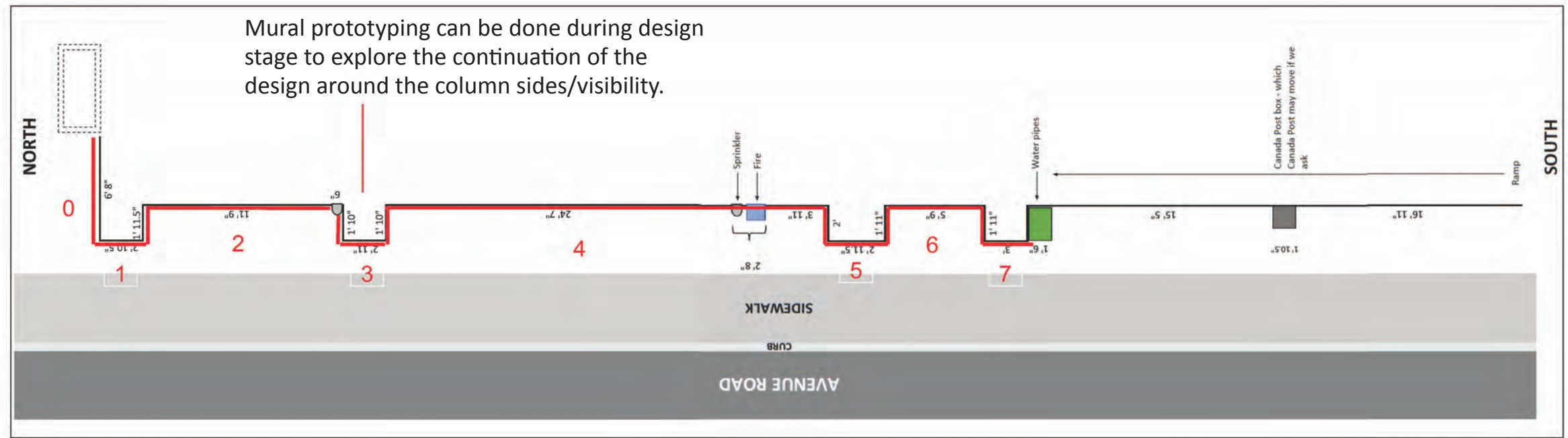
Main design to be on the front facing panels at the  
Avenue Rd. side. Column side panels should be  
considered during design process for continuity.

Edge lighting above  
for night time effect



Avenue Rd. side elevation





MURAL PLAN

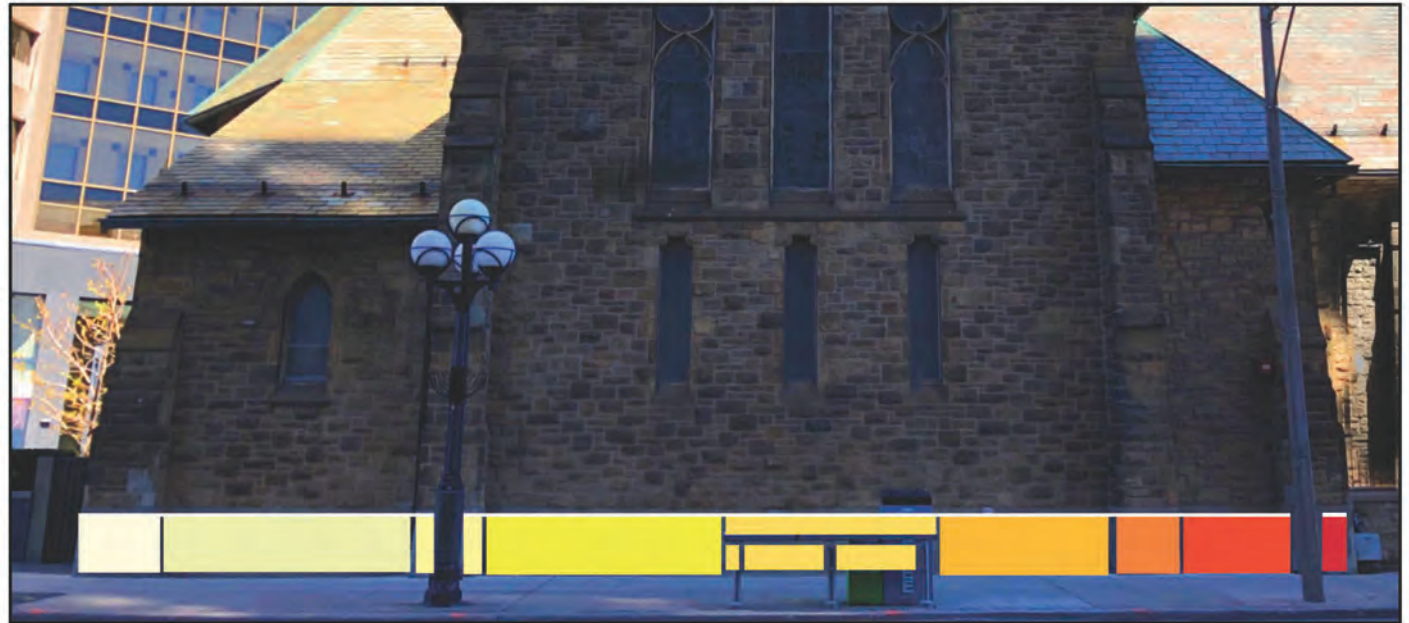


MAIN FRONT PANELS

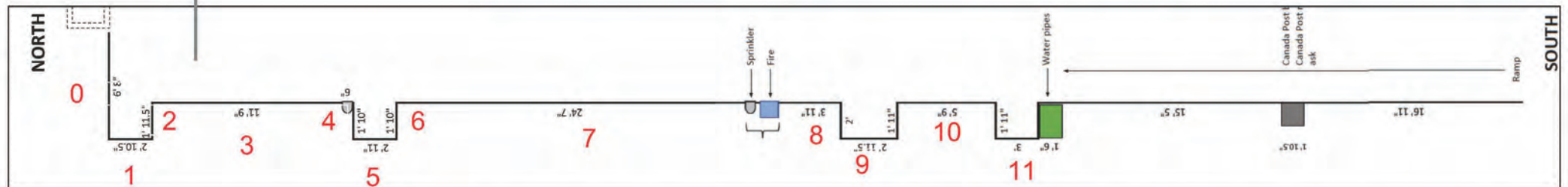
# CONCEPT 2

## Panel by Panel Design

Design will be like chapters or pages of a book, continuous all around including column sides



MURAL  
PLAN



Avenue Rd. side elevation



# Redeemer Mural Charrette

May 23, 2020

## **Participants:**

Pam, Dawn, Stephen, Joseph, Grant, Carolynn, Matthew, Anne, Bob, John

Idea Generation exercise in groups for developing

- 3 Topics for the mural
- Visual elements that might be used in the mural to communicate the topic
- One word to describe the effect of the mural

Zoom and Miro online tools were used and participants were asked to bring in images, objects, words to describe their initial thinking.

During the charrette participants were divided into 4 groups, 2-3 people in each group and through discussions they came up with ideas and topics that could be inspirational.

## GROUP 1:

Pam, Grant, Joseph

### Topic:

Creation

Collaborative working group “Relationship is Key” and the outcome is the reflection of the relationship. A bigger idea. Origin Stories – how everything comes together

### Visual Symbols:

Sky

Sun

Moon

## GROUP 2:

Dawn, Joseph, Matthew, Bob

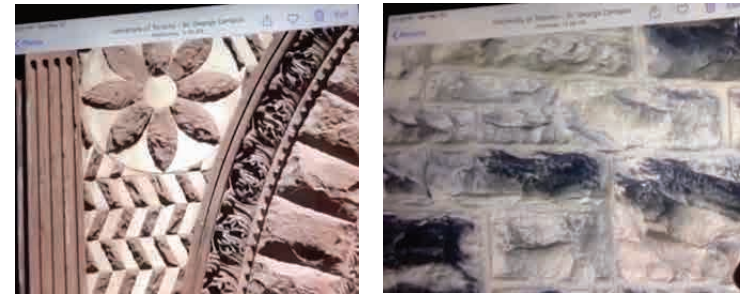
### Topics:

1. 7 indigenous teachings - Yukon



## 2. Story Telling with the Rocks

Inspired by “textures”, the Redeemer building, surrounding buildings, old stones, fossils, stone patterns... this approach will be telling the history of the area through textures and patterns of the stones.



## 3. River

River with rapids, lots of energy that flows.

There could be 2 canoes paddling together: indigenous on one side and settler on the other travelling on the river in the same direction. Animals can be embedded into the forest. (medicine wheel animals or others). As passers walk by, they discover these “details”.



Energy, harmony, history, stories



## GROUP 3:

Anne, Carolyn

### Topics:

#### 1. Water

Toronto's water belt. Toronto is laced with water, rolling rivers. The shape of the mural space is long and narrow, the length of the shape can be an inspiration for the topic.

Water links us all

#### 2. Forest and flowers

This could be incorporated into the water –river idea, forest, flowers landscape beside the river, land particularly, Mississaugas, interpretation of tree...

## GROUP 4:

Stephen, John

The images the group used are creation, nature, flora, fauna

The mural creates curiosity, makes people ask the question WHY? Why is this mural here? It will draw people into it. Reveals stories that are not visible from a distance.

Reconcili-Action

From a distance it will look in one way but the closer you get, more details are revealed, variety of topics are included in the mural. The best viewing will happen in 10'-12' range.

### Topics:

Indigenous life, honoring the portage

Truth

Resilience

Partnership

Treaties

Theology of creation

### Visual Symbols:

Partnership – treaties – 2 canoes travelling in the same direction as one. Treaties between First Nations and the Crown (Government of Canada) were made in good faith by First Nations, but in too many cases, have not been respected by the Crown".

### Impact:

DELIGHT

## RECOMMENDATIONS for Next Steps:

- A series (1-2 more) of idea generation discussions to explore different topics
- Future sessions to be facilitated by youth preferably indigenous youth
- More diverse and indigenous participation in the idea generation sessions
- Enough time to reach out to the invitees before session scheduling
- Introduce an honorarium for the participants
- The session format to be developed according to the group dynamic
- Artist Joseph Sagaj to be part of all the sessions



# Consultation about the Proposed Mural

June 20, 2020, 11:00am to 1:00

## Plenary # 1 – Reports from Breakout Groups:

**GROUP 1:** Stephen Allen reported.

Group included Tony Crosbie, Andrew Scorer, Joseph Sagaj.

- Mural should have lots of colour to contrast the cement paving and stone wall.
- Some political reference but this was not defined.
- Capture both historical and contemporary colonization.
- Offer vision of hopeful future.
- Provoke action.
- Earth as sacred.
- Capture/reflect the 7 Grandfather teachings: Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth.
- Mural should be a little disturbing and aesthetically pleasing.
- Generate dialogue.
- Reflect values at Redeemer – compassion, diversity, hospitality.

**GROUP # 2:** Sheree Drummond reported.

Group included Mary Pat Moore, Frances Humphreys, MJ Wilson, Kathryn Mills.

- Mural should reflect the Indigenous world view of the inter-connection in creation, as opposed to the commonly held view amongst settlers of dominating creation.

- Vision of travelling together – two canoes.
- River, water as movement.
- Healing.
- Hope.
- Avenue Rd and Bloor St. is a busy intersection. The mural could offer a challenge.
- Image of the four directions.
- The mural could seek to capture the church's role in its relationship with Indigenous people, both negative and positive.
- Image of the sun, of light, of opening our hearts to restoring right relations with Indigenous people.
- Embracing the differences between Indigenous people and settlers and newcomers.
- Suggest the mural be a series of panels – providing a sense of movement.

**Group # 3:** David Holt reported.

Group included Rachel Read, Susan Haig, Ron Waldie, Karen Turner.

- Some concern about the mural being close the ground – worry about snow and slush piling up. Is it possible to have the mural mounted at eye level and off the ground – if not attached to the stone wall, then to the ground?
- A mural with lots of colour.
- The mural could be a series of panels, reflecting different episodes rather than one episode.

# Consultation about the Proposed Mural con't

June 20, 2020, 11:00am to 1:00

## Plenary # 1 – Reports from Breakout Groups:

**GROUP # 4:** Dawn Lee reported.

Group included Sheryl Kennedy, Peter Dale, Heather Steeves.

- Suggestion not to limit what the Joseph Saga (the artist) can do.
- As a theme or concept, the mural could reflect reconciliation, respect, empathy, interest, understanding of different perspectives.
- The mural could reflect bridging of Indigenous – and non-Indigenous.
- Image of the flow of a river.
- Image of creation.
- Hope mural will encourage people to stop and consider the mural.
- Image of the location of the mural.
- Image of the land.
- Concepts of history, nature, spirituality.

**GROUP # 5:** Francis Martin reported.

- Image of a river, sense of flow, of an unfolding story, flow of time.

## Plenary # 2 - Reports from Breakout Groups:

**Group # 1:** Karen Turner reported.

Group included Vincent Lam, Heather Steeves, Aylin Doyle.

- Concept should reflect Indigenous thinking.
- Mural should reflect a sense of partnership between the parish and Indigenous people who contribute ideas.
- The mural project is an opportunity to reflect on how partnership is understood.
- Vital for the parish to listen to what Indigenous people are suggesting about the mural and have opportunity to engage.
- The artist's vision should be respected.

**Group # 2:** Mary Pat Moore reported.

Group included Francis Humphreys, Dawn Lee, Sheryl Kennedy, Joseph Sagaj.

- Appreciated Andrew Wesley thinking about beyond reconciliation and Joseph Sagaj about reconciliation.
- Parish ought to endorse and not approve the final drawing.
- Settler voices should not drown out Indigenous voices.
- How can the parish develop a meaningful partnership in this initiative?
- Parish should not control outcome and the outcome should be about the relationship/partnership. The mural is the vehicle in this process.



# Consultation about the Proposed Mural con't

June 20, 2020, 11:00am to 1:00

## Plenary # 2 – Reports from Breakout Groups:

### GROUP # 3: Stephen Allen reported.

Group included David Holt, Andrew Wesley, Esther Wesley, David Pabke, Francis Martin.

- A major theme we focused on was beyond reconciliation and how this will mean a very different Canada.
- Vision of a good life.
- There are Survivors [of residential schools] who embrace Traditional and Christian spiritualities, some of whom are priests and bishops.
- Can mural offer a calming effect at a very busy intersection?
- Image of the mural as a series of panels with different narratives – capturing a sense of transition from a painful time to a more hopeful time – where we have been, where we are now and where we want to be and how to portray Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives.

### Group # 4: MJ Wilson reported.

Group included Richard Van delft, Kathryn Mills, Catherine Dale, Ruth Dale.

- Appreciated hearing from Andrew Wesley and Joseph Sagaj about moving beyond reconciliation.
- Theme of working together – Indigenous community and the church – a partnership.
- Theme of hope.
- Visual elements up to the artist.

- The mural could offer a sense of hope, have a calming effect at a busy corner.
- The corner of Bloor and Avenue Road represents great wealth and great poverty. Church of The Redeemer is aware of this.
- Themes of mutuality, cooperation, living beyond reconciliation.
- The image of salmon swimming upstream against the current, facing great challenges but then there is the arrival.
- Image of the rainbow, of a covenant, of hope.

### Group # 5: Andrew Scorer reported.

Group included Abigail Young, Peter Dale, Joseph Sagaj.

- Image or concept of seven generations. The future belongs to future generations.
- The mural as a symbol of hope. The idea of a mural would not have happened 50 years ago.
- Could the mural incorporate the colonization both past and present and a sense of regret by the church?

## General Discussion:

- Is it possible to raise the mural 5 feet off the ground?
- Can't mount the mural on the stone wall. The building is a heritage building and getting approval would mean going to the Committee of Adjustment at City Hall – this is a major change and unlikely to be approved by the Committee.
- Could it be mounted on the sidewalk to get it higher off the ground. The sidewalk is city property.

# Consultation about the Proposed Mural

July 11, 2020, 11:00am to 1:00pm

**Contributors:** Sandra Campbell, *Mohawk*

Jeremie Caribou, *Plains Cree*

Cynthia Wesley *Esquimaux Chippewa os Georgina Island*

Carolyn King, *Mississauga of the Credit*

Diem Lafortune Marchand, *Plains Cree*

Marissa Magneson, *Métis*; Wanda Whitebird, *Mi'q ma*

**Facilitator:** Andrew Wesley, *Cree*

**Artist:** Joseph Sagaj, *Ojibway*

**Support:** Stephen Allen; Pamela Thomson

**Zoom Host:** Karen Chandler



## Plenary #1

### GROUP 1:

Stephen Allen reported.

**Contributors:** Sandra Campbell; Jeremie Caribou; Marissa Magneson; Wanda Whitebird.

#### The following ideas for images were suggested:

- Moccasins representing connections to the land.
- Moccasins between the sky and the water.
- Sneakers representing Indigenous youth, the voices of the future.
- Stars, important in some Indigenous traditions.
- Important parts of traditions, such as the creation stories which were taught and then taken away from Indigenous people in residential schools and as a result of colonization more generally.
- Water which sustains life for 2 legged and four-legged creatures.
- Reconciliation.
- Dish with One Spoon
- Two Wampum Belt
- Celebrate and honour Indigenous culture.
- Lots of colours.
- Celebrate and honour Indigenous culture.
- Stories about the little people/tricksters to remind us that we are not in complete control.
- Represent Indigenous people as we live today. Many of us have lived in Toronto for a long time and have raised our children on this land (Toronto). We never went anywhere.

- Represent our relationship to the land; reimagining our relationship to the land.
- The mural should not avoid uncomfortable and painful truths – much harm has been done to Indigenous people – colonization; residential schools...
- We are generating many ideas, but we need to respect the artist.
- **Structure/presentation:** What about a plaque that includes a bar code or QR code. Pedestrians passing by could scan the bar code with their phones and learn about the story of the mural.

### Group # 2:

Diem Marchand-Lafortune reported as Andrew Wesley had to leave.

**Contributors:** Cynthia Wesley Esquimaux; Carolyn King; Diem Marchand-Lafortune; Andrew Wesley.

#### The following ideas for images were suggested:

- The flow of water to symbolize the flow of history.
- Earth, fire, water.
- The wind.
- Birds, trees.
- Canoes representing movement, travel, trade routes.
- Symbols to represent a timeline of important moments in Indigenous people's history.
- Lots of colours.
- **Structure/presentation:** How can the mural be designed in such a way as to engage with those who walk by the mural?

## Plenary # 2:

### GROUP 1:

Pamela Thomson reported.

**Contributors:** Jeremie Caribou; Carolyn King; Diem Marchand-Lafortune; Wanda Whitebird.

#### The following ideas for images were suggested:

- Wampum belts. These could be on different murals and the murals would be mounted for specific events and messages.
- Honour and salute the 77,000+ Indigenous people who live in Toronto. (Resilience)
- Water is symbolic of time and of storyline flow
- Contact between Indigenous people and settlers.
- The different seasons. Each season brings different gifts.
- **Structure/presentation:** Plaque with a bar code; when scanned tells the story of the mural. Use of auto-text so when people walk by, they receive a message about the mural. [We wondered if ROM uses auto-text?]
- **Structure/presentation:** What about a digital mural?
- **Structure/presentation:** How might the pillars of the church be used? image of pillars of time.

Before we continued our conversation, Joseph Sagaj shared some thoughts. The following ideas for images were suggested:

- He acknowledged Wanda Whitebird's comment that Indigenous people are still here.
- The mural could reflect different protocols of Indigenous people.
- He talked about his own clan. Perhaps different clans could be represented on the mural.
- Joseph listens to different perspectives.

## Group # 2:

Stephen Allen reported.

**Contributors:** Sandra Campbell; Cynthia Wesley Esquimaux; Marissa Magneson.

#### The following ideas for images were suggested:

- Each season brings a different gift.
- Represent Inuit and Métis people on the mural.  
The infinity symbol is on the flag of the Métis Nation.
- What about the LGBTQI and Two-Spirited. The image of the rainbow is the symbol of the LGBTQI movement. What is the symbol for Two-Spirited people? {See the logo on the last page}
- Wampum belts.
- Little people/tricksters.
- Water – flowing from one panel to another.
- Include images that might be more familiar to those walking by who have little knowledge of Indigenous people such as the eagle feather.

#### Suggestions posted on the Chat Text:

- Removable panels - could go with stories of different seasons.
- The QVC code could share where to learn more about Indigenous peoples/ culture/history in Toronto - i.e. First People's Gallery is free and nearby.

#### Concluding reflections:

Joseph Sagaj concluded our time together with some insights and reflections as he listens to and considers the many ideas that are being generated.





## Artist Bio:

**Joseph Sagaj** is from the remote community of Neskantaga approximately 300 km north of Thunder Bay, Ontario. He graduated in Fine Arts at the Ontario College of Art & Design in 1985. In 1992, The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) selected Joseph's logo as a winning design, using it in all their publications. Since winning this national competition, Joseph has had numerous private and public commissions. He's designed logos for various organizations, which include Anishnawbe Health Toronto, Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment & Training Centre, Neskantaga First Nation, and Samson Cree Nation in Alberta, as well as others.

Joseph's completed mural projects for Neskantaga First Nation's School, Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment & Training Centre, and Anishnawbe Health's Elder's Room, and Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centre. He also designed and illustrated the first three Toronto International Pow Wow Posters at the CNE and the Roger's Centre (formerly the SkyDome).

Published materials include the drawings and writings for the INAC's 2005/06 Time Planner. This book was about the "Thirteen Moons" calendar that featured stories, legends and "a way of life" of the Aboriginal and Inuit people. Other published material include the Ministry of Education's booklet entitled "Empowering the Spirit of the Native People" in 1993, that used Joseph's illustrations that also presented Native spirituality, heritage, and stories.

In 2017, Joseph completed seven paintings of "Seven Stages of Life" for the Ministry of the Attorney General, Aboriginal Justice Division which are prominently displayed in their office.

Joseph currently lives and works in Toronto.



219 Front St E the building houses the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres