

Art Commission Review – Submittal Form

(Applicant complete below section)

Project Name: Philadelphia Stars Negro League Baseball Mural at Parkside & Belmont

Project Address: 1538 Belmont Ave **On Public Property?** Yes No

Total Budget: 55,000 **Utilizing City Funds?** Yes (specify amount): _____ No

Project Type (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building – New Construction or Addition | <input type="checkbox"/> Encroachment in/over ROW |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building – Renovation or Repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Signage (Reconsideration) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plaza/Park/Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Streetery (Reconsideration) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Project Team:

Agency/Org.: Mural Arts Philadelphia Design Lead (firm): N/A

Other: Lead Artist: David McShane

Primary Contact for Project Communications:

Name: Kate Jacobi

Affiliation: Senior Project Manager, Mural Arts

Email: [REDACTED]

(Art Commission staff complete below section)

Art Commission Meeting Date of Project Review: 4/8/26

Level of Review:

Concept Review Final Review If Final, specify date of preceding Concept Review: _____

Administrative Review (for projects with minimal visual impact on public realm)

Staff Notes (Optional):

Mural wall previously approved by Art Commission in September 2023



March 25, 2026

Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway Building
1515 Arch Street – 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Attn: Katherine Liss

On behalf of Mural Arts Philadelphia, I am requesting to be placed on the agenda for the April meeting to be held on April 8, 2026. I am submitting this letter for a project with the West Parkside community for a reimagined mural that we recently lost to development across the street at Parkside & Belmont Avenues. This mural honors the legacy and history of the Philadelphia Stars Negro Baseball League and will be redone on a to-be-built wall at the Philadelphia Stars Negro League Memorial Park. We will be seeking a “final review” for this project.

I have attached photos of the original mural as well as the mock-up rendering of the proposed reimagined mural to be located at the park. The murals would be painted on cloth material and later installed onto the new wall.

If you have any questions or require any additional information, please call me at 610-299-2301 or email at kate.jacobi@muralarts.org.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kate Jacobi', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Kate Jacobi
Senior Project Manager
Community Projects & Restorations



Philadelphia Stars Negro League Baseball Mural Project
at Belmont & Parkside

Project Partner: West Parkside community

Mural Name: *Philadelphia Stars Negro League Baseball*

Address: 1538 Belmont Ave (Belmont & Parkside)

Project Manager: Kate Jacobi

Lead Artist: David McShane

Project Description:

Mural Arts Philadelphia has worked with the West Parkside community to reimagine the original mural into an expanded design to include more players from the Philadelphia Stars' history and other context about the Negro League. It was very important to keep a mural at/near this site given its historical significance of where the baseball field was located.

An artist statement is attached separately that provides further information about the original mural and the expanded content.

Mural Location:

The exterior mural at the Negro League Memorial Park will be located on a to-be-built freestanding wall where a current wooden fence is located. The mural will be a reimagined and expanded design of the original mural that once stood across the street on 4304 Parkside Ave (demolished in winter 2026).

Installation Plan:

The mural will be produced off-site in a studio by the lead artist and a team of assistant artists. When the painting work on mural cloth is completed the mural sheets will be installed onto the new wall (primed first then installed with Golden Paintworks acrylic gel adhesive). The artwork will then be sealed with Benjamin Moore Corotech Clear Acrylic Sealer V027-00. After that, two coats of MSA Satin Varnish from Golden Paintworks will be applied to provide additional protection against UV rays and general wear and tear.



Project Timeline:

Spring 2025-Winter 2026	Mural research and design
April 8, 2026	Art Commission review
April 15, 2026	Mural design unveiled at the park on Jackie Robinson Day
April-July 2026	Produce mural (host several community paint days)
August-September 2026	Install on the wall / mural dedication

Project Budget:

\$55,000 (funded by a grant from Senator Vincent Hughes)

Budget specifics (aside from administrative and project management):

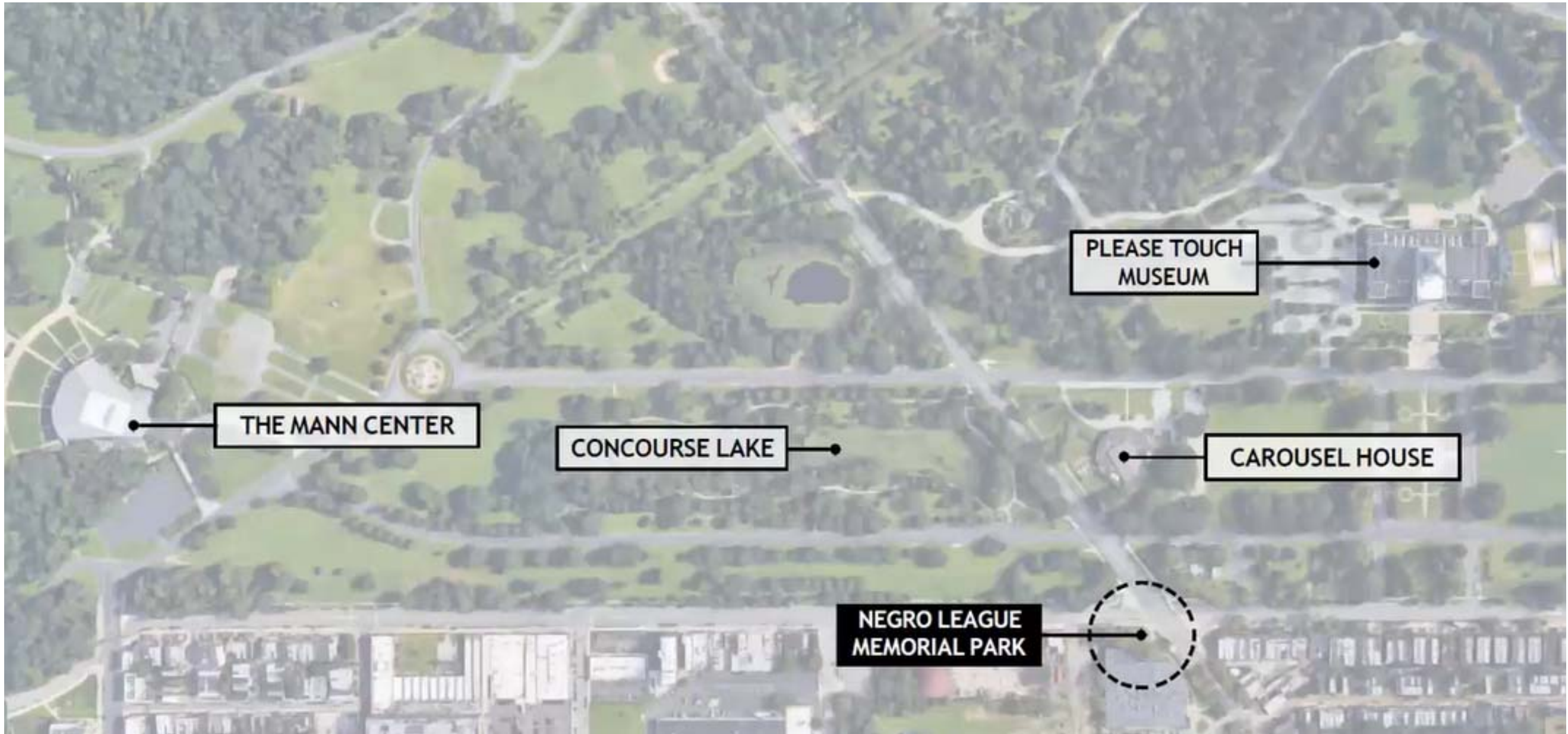
Design Phase	\$4,000 - research and design labor
Production Phase	\$22,000 - production labor in studio
Installation Phase	\$12,500 - installing on the new wall
Paint & Sundries	\$4,500 (primer, paint, gel, sealer, mural cloth)

Mural Arts Philadelphia
Belmont & Parkside Project
Philadelphia Stars Negro League Baseball Mural

Project Manager: Kate Jacobi
Artists: David McShane



Aerial map of the Belmont & Parkside intersection within the Centennial District in West Philadelphia



Site context map of the Belmont & Parkside intersection within the Centennial District in West Philadelphia



Original mural at 4304 Parkside Ave (no longer standing/building was demolished in Jan/Feb 2026)



Original mural at 4304 Parkside Ave (Fall 2024)



Original mural site at 4304 Parkside Ave (February 2026)



Memorial Park across from the original mural (before renovations)



Memorial Park across from the original mural (before renovations)



Proposed new mural in Memorial Park



Proposed new mural in Memorial Park (left section)



Proposed new mural in Memorial Park (middle section)



Proposed new mural in Memorial Park (right section)

Notes on the Original Philadelphia Stars Mural

Philadelphia Stars Negro League Baseball Mural

(Exterior, 30' x 86') Belmont & Parkside Avenues, West Philadelphia,

Sponsored by the Business Association of West Parkside, The Neighborhood Transformation

Initiative, The Department of Human Services Intensive Delinquency Prevention Program, and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Philadelphia Green Program

April - June 2005 (8 weeks, with participation from the students of Community Council Therapeutic After-School Program and other volunteers, grid method)

Because I am passionate about portraying the subject of baseball in my paintings, I was truly honored to get the chance to paint this mural. I met with Miller Parker and Marjorie Ogilvie of the Philadelphia Business and Technology Center, who spearheaded both this mural and the Philadelphia Stars Negro League Memorial Park located across the street. We discussed some of the unique features of the Negro Leagues and the history of the Philadelphia Stars. They lent me a large supply of reference books and photos, which I supplemented with even more reference books from the library. I also got to meet and discuss the history of the Stars in more detail with the four local surviving players: Mahlon Duckett, Stanley "Doc" Glenn, Bill "Ready" Cash, and Harold Gould. They saw the design and they all expressed that they liked it, which was a relief to me. In my view, it is most important for a mural design to have the approval of those that it honors above all others.

Two weeks before the scaffolding went up, there was a huge dedication ceremony for the Philadelphia Stars Memorial Park across the street, during which a 7-foot tall bronze statue (by local artist Phil Sumpter) was lowered into place from a large crane. Many people were honored in the ceremony, and the plans for the mural were unveiled. There were also plans to redo the sidewalks and plant a community garden (through Philadelphia Green) on the lot under the mural. This thus created a really impactful gateway into West Philadelphia from Fairmount Park, with the Stars Memorial Park and the Stars Mural straddling either side of Belmont Avenue as one crosses Parkside Avenue traveling west. At the time there were also longer-range plans for a possible Negro League Museum and a little league field nearby.

The mural was painted in eight weeks in some very hot, humid days with some extensive rain delays. On Saturdays during that time, I met with eighteen 10 to 15 year-old kids from the Community Council Therapeutic After-School Program. These kids were in MAP's "Artworks! Program" for truant youth. Along with their teacher Michele Wilson I taught them about the mural process. They came to the wall and helped prepare and paint the ground level of the mural, with the highlight of the sessions being their creation of pennants for the various teams in the Negro Leagues (which decorate the bottom of the mural). The upper levels of the mural were drawn up and painted by me, but I had some volunteer help filling in some of the shapes in the design with color. Grace Garrity, a senior at Lower Merion High School, did her Senior Service Project by working on the mural. Another high school student who lived three blocks away, Amanda Roxas, volunteered as well just because she loves to paint. Three students from the Mural Training Program, which I taught at MAP, also did some time on the mural: Angela Basile, Paul Downie, and David Fuller. Two other neighborhood kids contributed by painting pennants at the bottom of the mural as well: Collin Anthony Clark and Corey Potter.

The mural was featured in an article in the City Paper (June 22-28) and in an Article in the Philadelphia Inquirer (June 28), and was also featured in a piece on Comcast Sportsnet.

The wall had three distinct physical features that are not ideal for painting detailed portions of the mural, so I chose to work around them. The first was a large swath of roofing tar (a less than ideal substrate) on the top left of the mural, the second is a portion of an incredibly bumpy stone wall at the bottom right of the mural, and third was a vertical 16" hump in the center of the mural. I managed to successfully deal with and obscure these features in the final mural. The overall

mural design, then, came out of all my discussions and research. I wanted it to capture the qualities of the Negro Leagues in general while focusing on the Philadelphia Stars in particular. One of the hallmarks of the League was the more aggressive style of play and the superb talent of the players. I chose dynamic poses to display various game skills: fielding, base running, pitching, batting, and catching. The players are mostly anonymous, to represent all the guys who played for the Stars over the years, but I did base some of the faces on photos of actual players. The pitcher is based on Wilmer Harris (recently deceased local Stars alumnus), the batter is based on Harold Gould, and the guy giving chatter at the bottom left of the mural is based on Mahlon Duckett. (Chatter from the dugout was another hallmark of the Negro Leagues). Negro League baseball games were one of the highlights of the black social calendar in the era when blatant racism barred African Americans from movie theaters and restaurants. As a result, spectators came to the games dressed in suits and ties and their Sunday best. I tried to show this in the background crowd scene on the right side of the mural. The wooden fence was a feature of the rickety 44th and Parkside Ballpark, where the games were played. The ballpark was located across Belmont Ave. (then known as 44th Street) from the mural. The background pattern on the left side of the mural has a close-up view of grass (the ballpark apparently didn't cut its grass as frequently as it should) and a large, dirty, well-used baseball (the team budget was such that teams often reused balls until they were lost or they fell apart). Compositionally, there is a main rectangle out of which players' arms or legs or bats protrude. This breaking of the rectangle is meant to visually represent the players' struggles against the racist societal barriers of the times. By remembering the past and honoring those that helped change society, the mural will hopefully inspire new generations of social change makers.

Since its completion in 2005, the mural has gone through several rounds of restorations – all due to structural problems and repairs on the property. The first repair was made in 2011 when a section of stucco in the lower left of the mural was removed and re-stuccoed for structural reasons. This section included some of the grass background, the leg of one of the infielders, the player chattering from the dugout, and the original credits. I repainted these areas on cloth and adhered the cloth with acrylic glue to the new patches of stucco on the wall. The second round of restoration came in 2014 after a large section of stucco on the right half of the mural buckled and started falling off the wall. A cement contractor removed the rest of the loose stucco on the right side of the wall and with cement patches beveled the edge where the stucco that was still in place met the raw brick where the stucco was removed. I again repainted these sections on cloth, and then primed the old brick and new stucco areas and glued the cloth on these sections with acrylic glue. The imagery that was included in this repair was the large central pitcher's leg, the large batter, part of the crowd scene and fence in the background, and the "Home of the Phila Stars" logo. In 2019, part of the bottom stone portion of the wall collapsed (below the catcher and umpire on the right side of the mural). A contractor repaired the stone. This was for the most part below the mural imagery and new stucco covered over a small portion where the feet of the batter and the catcher were. Before restoration of this new patch of stucco was able to be made, MAP was notified that the lot in front of the wall had been sold and a developer was planning on building on the lot, which would ultimately cover up the entire mural. Negotiations for possible replacement of the mural followed, and any planned restoration work was halted. What seemed to make most sense at the time was to have the developer build a new wall across the street behind the existing Philadelphia Stars Negro League Memorial Park and for MAP to reformat the design and repaint the mural on that wall. The Covid pandemic further delayed things, and the developer met resistance from the community on his proposed building. In 2022, Donna Peters, the woman who owned the house that the mural was painted on, died. Her sister, who inherited the house, did further structural work on the original mural wall, and the entire right half of the mural was restuccoed, so only half of the mural was visible. The developer eventually purchased the house, and in January 2026, the building was torn down. There is a plan in place for a new wall to be built on the other side of Belmont Avenue which would be 85' long and 12' high (at its highest point) and would create a backdrop for the existing Philadelphia Stars Negro League Memorial Park (which is also undergoing renovations and restoration). This wall will be painted with a new, more detailed history of the Philadelphia Stars to replace the old mural.

Notes on the New Philadelphia Stars Mural

Description of the design for the new Philadelphia Stars Negro League Baseball Mural on the new back wall of the soon-to-be refurbished and renamed Miller Parker Philadelphia Stars Negro League Memorial Park, Belmont and Parkside Aves, West Philadelphia

A new mural on the other side of Belmont Ave, behind the existing Philadelphia Stars Negro League Memorial Park, will replace the existing original Philadelphia Stars Negro League Baseball Mural, which was demolished for new development in January of 2026. There are plans for a restoration and renovation of the park, including renaming it in honor of Miller Parker (who sadly passed away in 2023), the passionate former director of the West Parkside Business Association, who was the true force behind the creation of the park and the original mural. Digsau, a landscape architecture firm, has been working on the designs for these renovations, which includes a new wall that will house the new mural. I have made designs for this new mural (which requires reformatting since the proportions are much different from the old wall), and as such wanted to include familiar elements from the old mural, but also add new elements that further amplify the rich history of the Philadelphia Stars and Negro League Baseball in Philadelphia.

So the new design features 17 stand-out players from the Stars long history:

*Homer “Goose” Curry (Right Fielder and Manager 1942-47, shown shouting chatter from the dugout)

*Roy “Red” Parnell, (Left Fielder 1936-43 and Manager 1940-41, shown making a leaping catch)

James “Biz” Mackey (Catcher 1933-35, shown crouching in full catcher’s equipment)

*Wilmer Harris (Right-handed Pitcher 1945-48, shown in mid-windup)

*Mahlon Duckett (Second Base 1940-48, shown as a base runner)

Frank Austin (Shortstop 1944-48, shown attempting to tag out a base runner)

Webster McDonald (Right-handed Pitcher 1933-40 and Manager 1934-36, represented by a baseball)

*Stanley “Doc” Glenn (Catcher 1944-50, represented by a catcher’s mask)

*Gene Benson (Center Fielder 1937-48, shown in the follow through of a bat swing)

Stuart “Slim” Jones (Left-handed Pitcher 1934-38, shown in mid-windup)

Jake Dunn (Right Fielder 1934-40, 1943 and Manager 1939-40, represented by a ball in a fielder’s glove)

*Harold Gould (Right-handed Pitcher 1947-48, shown in mid-windup)

Bill “Ready” Cash (Catcher 1943-48, shown running to first base)

Dick Lundy (Shortstop and Manager of the 1933 inaugural year, represented by a Phila Stars hat)

Jim West (First Baseman 1939-45, shown stretching to make a catch at first base)

Jud Wilson (Left Fielder 1933-39 and Manager 1937-39, shown at bat)

Henry McHenry (Right-handed Pitcher 1938-48, shown following through on his pitching windup)

These players are all depicted in an action-pose that accentuates their best strengths as players (pitchers throwing, fielders making catches, sluggers batting). Goose Curry is shown shouting chatter from the dugout – a hallmark of Negro League play. Mahlon Duckett is shown stealing – and aggressive base running was another feature of the league. The asterisks denote players or poses that were featured in the original Phila Stars mural. The additional players in the new design help tell a fuller story of the team’s talent and character. One very important non-player is also represented in the design. On the far right of the mural design is a portrait of entrepreneurial businessman Ed Bolden, who founded the team and owned it through its entire existence.

Other elements from the original mural that are carried over to the new design are the background elements of the unmown grass and the worn-out brown baseball (a reference to the lack of resource that the league suffered that sometimes created less than ideal playing conditions), the crowd dressed in its Sunday best in the stands behind the “Home of the Phila Stars” logo, and the logo for the 44th and Parkside Ballpark (where the Stars played from 1933-1947). I added a few things to flesh out the stories and history of the home games. There is chicken wire behind the logo for the ballpark to denote the rickety wood and wire backstop behind home plate, and the “Hattie’s Hot Dogs” sign is a reference to a story Harold Gould and Stanley Glenn told me about a woman named Hattie who sold hot dogs from a big tub of water that she heated by prying scraps of wood from the stadium bleachers to keep her fire going). I also added a Pennsylvania

Railroad logo and rising smoke – referencing that the ballpark was on the PRR property and was sometimes enshrouded in smoke as trains came in and out of the adjacent railyard during games. In addition, I added logos for the other two fields where the Stars played some of their home games: Passon Field, 48th and Spruce, from 1933-35, and Shibe Park (aka Connie Mack Stadium) from 1943-52.

Another important historical element I wanted to add to the new design that was not in the old mural is a nod to the other African American baseball teams that played in Philadelphia. On the left side of the design is an oval with crossed bats that has logos for these teams: The Excelsior Base Ball Club of Philadelphia (1866), the Pythians (1866-1887), The Phila Giants (1902-1911), the Hilldale Athletic Club (based in Darby, PA), (1916-1932), and of course the Phila Stars (1933-1952). At the far left of the mural design are logos for the two most prominent leagues: The Negro National League and the Negro American League, along with pennants for the most notable teams from those leagues, who would have been the Stars opponents: the Pittsburgh Crawfords, the Newark Eagles, the Homestead Grays, the New York Cubans, the NY Black Yankees, and the Baltimore Elite Giants from the NNL; the Cleveland Buckeyes, the Memphis Red Sox, the Chicago American Giants, the Kansas City Monarchs, the Indianapolis Clowns, and the Birmingham Black Barons from the NAL. There is also a large Phila Stars pennant featured as well. In the center of the mural there is a logo for the 1934 Negro National League Championship, which was the only one that Stars managed to capture throughout its storied history.

My hope is that the new mural will not just be a colorful backdrop to the Philadelphia Stars Negro League Memorial Park, but will draw folks in and be it's own central monument that conveys the rich history that took place on the very site where the new mural will stand.