

PAINTING OUR PUBLIC PLACES: MURALISM AND PLACEMAKING IN ATLANTA'S
CASTLEBERRY HILL

by

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(Under the Direction of Sungkyung Lee)

ABSTRACT

Muralism is a popular art trend in many U.S. cities today, making art more accessible to the masses, democratic in expression, and engaging to communities. With this growing popularity, there are still gaps in the knowledge of how mural content, spatial conditions, and community context relate to each other. Although murals are a visual art form, their location, treatment, and integration within a neighborhood can be important to a mural's reception from its viewers and its surrounding community. Therefore, this study addresses this issue by conducting a case study on one of Atlanta, Georgia's historic neighborhoods and mural hotspots, Castleberry Hill. In analyzing the relationships between Castleberry Hill's murals and context, this study found that murals can play a significant role in urban placemaking by providing community representation and engaging public spaces. In better understanding spatial-thematic relationships, muralism can become a more effective tool for placemaking in urban communities.

INDEX WORDS: Muralism, mural art, placemaking, public space, spatial-thematic relationships, Castleberry Hill, neighborhood development, community identity, Black representation, public art, democratic art, landscape architecture, urban planning

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents. As a first-generation college student, their support in love and encouragement has been limitless and has brought me to this point. I learned the values of a strong work ethic, self-confidence, and empathy through my parents. Growing up in a biracial household taught me the importance of identity, culture, and representation. Altogether, my parents helped me become the person I am today and pursue my interests and dreams.

Thank you, Mom and Dad.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the cryptic cave paintings of prehistoric communities to the stimulating streetscapes of today's urban areas; from revered religious frescoes decorating chapel ceilings to covert artistic taggings along back-alleys; from hallways of schools, libraries, and museums to outdoor public gathering spaces, murals are everywhere and are used for a myriad of motivations. Murals are simple in concept – large paintings done on walls, ceilings, or any other permanent structures – and given their simplicity, they often serve as a versatile form of public street art and engagement. Their straightforward application means that murals can be considered one of the oldest forms of art. Yet, over thousands of years, humans continue to use murals for their accessible, impactful, and intimate aesthetics with ever evolving and expanding purposes, themes, and canvases.

In more recent decades, mural art making and appreciation has been a rising trend in major U.S. urban areas due to two main reasons. First is the general change in perception of public street art. Not all modern street art is condoned by today's society in the U.S.; particularly illicit graffiti and guerrilla art projects are still associated with vandalism, disorder, and urban blight (Vanderveen & van Eijk 2016). However, sanctioned street art has not only become increasingly accepted as a form of art, but it is even desired as a form of civic pride, community engagement, and city beautification (Conrad 1995; Mohd Shobri et al. 2017). Street art, as a whole, is receiving more attention as a low-cost, but effective strategy to improve urban life as its benefits become more widely recognized. One of the most obvious and important benefits

from muralism is its democratic and accessible nature. By bringing art directly to the people in public spaces, murals can spread and catalyze the benefits that come with art making and art viewing to communities that often lack such artistic resources or inspirations. Today, a growing number of city governments and organizations are establishing mural initiatives and creating extensive mural collections with these benefits in mind.

Second, ease of application has also allowed for a rapid increase in the number of murals as public street art. There are many opportunities to paint murals within cities, as there are many blank surfaces to serve as canvases. Moreover, there are areas within cities that are considered dilapidated and in-need of aesthetic enhancement; thus, adding a mural is one of the easiest ways to visually enrich these spaces. Some paint, a vision, and a permanent structure are all one needs to realize a mural, which can transform a blank surface into a masterpiece or an intimidating space into an inviting experience. In turn, the installment of murals can be an initial approach to placemaking and community engagement, advertising and asserting identity, or remediating and enhancing the reputation of a place.

As murals gain popularity, some U.S. city districts, and even cities themselves, have become famous for their mural collections. Districts like Miami, Florida's Wynwood Arts District or Los Angeles, California's Downtown Arts District are well-known for their concentrations of murals, while cities, like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, have thousands of murals spread throughout their metropolitan area. Other cities, like Atlanta, are gaining attention for their burgeoning mural art scene. Despite this growing public mural trend in U.S. cities, there is still limited research looking at mural content and spatial relationships in urban landscapes and how these relationships are linked to community identity and value. Therefore, this paper aims to address this issue and inform how landscape architects, planners, and other stakeholders might

effectively use murals for spatial enhancement, neighborhood representation, and overall placemaking.

Relevance to Landscape Architecture

Murals are often overlooked as a 2-dimensional element in a design discipline like landscape architecture, which mostly works within a 3-dimensional medium. However, murals play a special role in landscape architecture and other design and planning disciplines as they easily elevate a space through color, illustration, and messaging. For instance, they can beautify a dilapidated space, enhance an experience along a routine path, or inspire through thought-provoking imagery. Although murals are first and foremost visual art, they often offer an easy, but effective approach to achieving multi-functional physical designs. By using murals, designers have the opportunity to transform any existing utilitarian infrastructure into a concurrent art piece, infographic, or monument.

Murals also have impact beyond their artistic attributes, including empowerment, education, economic support, justice, health and wellbeing, and preservation. These benefits are often quantitatively hard to measure, but they are noted in many mural studies and theories regarding community impact (Conrad 1995; Delgado & Barton 1998; Marschall 1999). These benefits are also cited as the supporting motivation behind many mural art campaigns implemented by both public and private sector entities. These entities mainly include city governments, urban planning and art programs, artist co-ops, and non-profit organizations with a range of missions, including urban redevelopment, art literacy, social justice, community preservation, and many more. Therefore, murals are not only a form of art or visual enhancement

for spaces but are increasingly recognized as an inter-disciplinary tool that can be used for social, cultural, and economic impact.

With the growing interest and noted value of murals to urban spaces, it becomes pertinent that landscape architects, urban planners, and other community stakeholders better understand how murals can be used in urban design to transform and/or benefit communities. This means design professionals can no longer regard murals as strictly a visual art form, but they must also look at their spatial quality and community connections. Murals inhabit the spaces people live in, decorate the surfaces people interact with, and artistically realize the values, concerns, and ideas people form as communities. Looking at where a mural is located, how a mural interacts with its surroundings, and how a mural is experienced and treated can provide clues as to how it fits into a community. These spatial conditions can then allude to the roles murals successfully or unsuccessfully serve for its context. Plus, relating these conditions to the mural's visual content and the community context can lead to answers to questions like what kinds of murals complement their location, what locations can best host murals, or what mural content or locations lack connection to the neighborhood.

Concurrently in the field of urban and community design, the process of placemaking has been more frequently referenced and implemented in practice over time. Placemaking is considered as “the way...human beings transform the places in which [they] find ourselves into places in which [they] live” (Schneekloth & Shibley 1995). A huge motivation of placemaking is an emphasis on local knowledge, influence, and inspiration in order to directly include and promote the local community through spatial design, while creating a place that fits and supports their needs. This leads to a focus on public space and recognizing community identities, values, and concerns to better serve the goals of placemaking. Therefore, it seems with a mural's public

nature, the art form becomes a noteworthy component of placemaking design approaches.

Whether muralism as placemaking is successful, though, seemingly depends on the same factors other community design practices rely on – listening to and involving the community to meet their needs rather than solely staying within an expert-driven approach. However, when done well, muralism can be incorporated in placemaking strategies to enhance urban living and community integrity.

When considering space, context, and placemaking, murals can offer so much more than aesthetic value. Studying these relationships can provide more information on mural impacts on urban communities and can help inform the success of future mural projects and developments. In the end, a better understanding of muralism in public spaces can allow them to become a more valuable tool to landscape architects, urban businesses and residents, and other design and community stakeholders when it comes to placemaking and urban design.

Study Approach

This study argues that in order to effectively use murals for placemaking in communities, mural visual content, spatial conditions, and community context must all be considered. Visual content includes the images, themes, patterns, colors, and texts that are used in mural paintings. Spatial conditions refer to a mural's location and placement, the overall quality of the space, its integration and treatment within that space. Community context looks at the major and unique attributes of the neighborhood, including its history and its people. Therefore, this study will proceed by addressing three main research questions: 1) How mural visual content and spatial conditions reflect neighborhood and community context, identity, and values? 2) How mural visual content and spatial conditions relate to each other to reaffirm or redefine neighborhood

and community context? 3) How can these observations inform mural design and placement for future planning in other neighborhoods and communities? In answering these broader questions, this paper also aims to address more specific questions, like what relationships between content, space, and context are most notable; what visual content works best for certain spaces; and how different spaces affect the experiences of the murals.

With these questions in mind, this study proceeded with a literature review of existing knowledge and a case study to present new information on mural visual, spatial, community relations, and placemaking. The literature review summarized mural impacts, trends, and issues that explain mural theories, usage, and effects on community development. This provided background information as to how murals are used and valued by urban communities, communities of color, and formal mural programs. Some theories in placemaking were provided as well as an introduction as to how murals fit into placemaking. The difference in muralism and graffiti art was also defined for the purpose of this research.

Subsequently, a case study focused on a neighborhood in downtown Atlanta, Georgia called Castleberry Hill. The case study reviewed the neighborhood's context, history, demographics, and mural trends, then a content and spatial analysis was conducted on the murals to help critically explore their relationships and to help answer the three main research questions. This study focused on data collection through observations and analyzing these observations to find patterns and traits in mural development in terms of content and space. Then, there was a discussion regarding what seemingly worked or did not work to make murals more successful for placemaking in the neighborhood. Murals were discussed in terms of how well they represented Castleberry Hill, how their locations and spatial qualities mutually affected the mural content,

and how visual and physical access affected the experience of the murals. Study takeaways were summarized on these relationships.

There were some limitations to this study, and one important limitation was that community members were not surveyed or interviewed in this research process despite their importance to mural developments. Interviewing community members, and possibly other mural stakeholders, would have been given more insight to the murals, how they fit and serve their context, but this also would have required more time, which this study's time frame did not allow. Moreover, the decision was made to not conduct these interviews in order to focus on the observable factors of the murals in their context, which already provided a significant amount of information to study. This focus allowed an elaboration on the content, function, and spatial conditions of the murals so that this study could better identify and define these variables and raise awareness of their potential effects on the experience of a mural and its impact on placemaking.

Why Castleberry Hill?

Located in the heart of Atlanta and covering roughly only a quarter square mile, Castleberry Hill was chosen based on three main reasons. First, Castleberry Hill has a thriving mural scene, that, upon preliminary observations, seems mostly accessible to the public, relatable to the community, and variable in location, placement, and quality of the mural's surroundings. Second, as the neighborhood is federally recognized as a national historic place, its history is notably distinct, significant, and recorded. With such a prominent history, it becomes easier to assess murals that reference the neighborhood's history and the neighborhood's affiliation to the growth of Atlanta. Third, in more recent decades, Castleberry Hill has seen unique demographic

developments. Gentrification is a concern for the neighborhood, as many of its historic industrial buildings and warehouses are being converted to modern residential lofts, artist studios, and commercial businesses. However, the neighborhood has strong connections to Atlanta's Black community, and this continues today as Castleberry Hill is often noted for its flourishing Black-owned businesses, its proximity to the city's historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and its close ties to one of America's most successful Black-owned real estate companies, the H. J. Russell & Company. Therefore, with the influx of artists and investment, plus the connections to the local Black community, Castleberry Hill has an interesting community context for murals to reference. With these factors, plus the manageable site scale, Castleberry Hill and its mural movement appear to be ideal for the study of relationships between mural content, spatial conditions, and community context.

Summary of Remaining Chapters

The organization of this thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 is a literature review presenting background knowledge regarding murals as public art in the U.S. and reviewing the purpose and value of public murals, the issues and conflicts, and the current trends of murals domestically. It also elaborates on ideas of placemaking and how murals fall into this design process. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the neighborhood, Castleberry Hill, describing its context within Atlanta's mural scene, its neighborhood mural trend, its general history, and its current demographic status. Chapter 4 describes the methodology of this spatial-thematic case study, while Chapter 5 summarizes and discusses the results from this methodology. Chapter 6 concludes this study with a summary and recommendations for future research and application of this study's findings.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: MURAL ART FOR PUBLIC SPACE

The reputable Chicano muralist Leo Tanguma once explained that the reason he paints publicly is because “the best purpose of art is to enhance the human dignity of those that have been deprived of it” (2001). Murals fulfill this purpose by utilizing everyday infrastructure and public space as an opportunity to bring art, plus the benefits associated with art, directly to the people. Compared to many other art forms, mural paintings have the advantages of versatility in what they depict, accessibility for collaboration and engagement, adaptability to enrich a myriad of physical spaces, and affordability to be implemented quickly and equitably. Therefore, this chapter will provide a summary of existing literature that elaborates on these notable traits and benefits of murals, while reviewing how it fits into placemaking design principles. This chapter will also cover the conflicting issues in muralism, how muralism is being supported today in U.S. cities, and how previous studies have addressed muralism’s spatial relations. This contextual information will lead into the approach and discussion of this study’s analysis of murals content and spatial relationships.

Muralism’s U.S. Roots in Communities of Color and Democratic Expression

When looking at the history of muralism in the U.S. and how the art form developed into the aesthetic trend it is in today’s urban environments, much credit should be given to the leadership and contribution of artists and communities of color. Muralism first gained traction in the U.S. in the early and mid-1900s with the First and Second Great Migrations, as Black

southerners relocated to northern cities to escape segregationist Jim Crow laws and limited economic opportunities (de Miguel Molina et al. 2020). At the same time, Mexican Americans also settled in growing U.S. cities, bringing the influences of famous Mexican muralists Jose Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros to their new urban surroundings (Conrad 1995). In response to being in these unfamiliar, often socially challenging or hostile, environments, these communities of color sought ways to establish their new neighborhoods, redefine themselves socially, and assert their unique cultures (de Miguel Molina et al. 2020). Mural making was one main strategy used to address all three of these goals simultaneously by allowing communities to claim and control their physical space, depict themselves in their own liking, and showcase their history and values as reminder of their roots and identity.

Additionally, in a time when most major art institutions were exclusive to white artists and audiences, murals became a tool to make art more accessible to all races, cultures, and socio-economic classes (Cordeiro et al. 2012).

Today, the connection between U.S. mural art and urban communities of color is still very present, especially with the rise of social justice movements, like Black Lives Matter, Stop Asian Hate, immigration reform, and indigenous rights. Outside of issues tied to racial, ethnic, and cultural identity, there have also been other social causes that utilize murals for their representation and advocacy, including LGBTQ+, women's rights, and labor rights movements. In being available and adaptable to many identities and narratives, murals are essential to the promotion of intersectionality, making them a significant form of expression for marginalized communities that often face nuanced and compounding socio-political and economic experiences and pressures.

Art is suggested to be most successful when it challenges traditional styles and ideas (Lippard 1990; Helguera 2011), and public murals can be considered one of the most provoking forms of art. This is due to the democratic nature of mural art, which can be defined in three ways. First, muralism is visually democratic. It is a grassroots tool for so many disadvantaged artists and communities to paint, publicize, and protest injustices in society, advocate their needs and ideas, and even encourage action (Marschall 1999). The accessibility of muralism due to its ease of application explains why it has served as a visual platform for so many disenfranchised communities historically and presently. Murals offer an affordable but widely visible way to highlight the perspectives and visions of communities who are often oppressed or ignored due to their social status and limited resources (Addario 2020). Simultaneously, when communities and individuals are allowed to visually depict themselves through more localized and/or personal perspectives, this inherently challenges the dominant, generalist representations of the community portrayed in mass media, which can subvert expectations or stereotypes (Moss 2010; Jarman 1998).

Second, the democratic nature of murals lies not only in what it is being said or depicted in the content of the mural, but also how the mural itself is made, which often differs from traditional art making. Typically, there is no individual voice deciding what a mural will depict and how it will be depicted. Instead, mural making can be a collaborative process, with the community either in mind, involved, or in leadership; thus, empowering communities by amplifying their voice, serving their needs, and increasing their agency. This also allows for a wider, more diverse contribution to the discipline of art and the design of outdoor public spaces, so it's not only left up to the experts, the wealthy, and those who hold positions of power. Therefore, murals can be used for placemaking, allowing local residents to transform and control

their spaces as they see appropriate, with or without the help of design or city professionals (Schneekloth & Shibley 1995). It gives power back to the people in how their spaces should look, how they engage these spaces, and how they want to represent themselves to others.

Third, public muralism allows for the democratic use of space. In other words, murals not only support social, political, and cultural movements through their imagery and process, but also help to reach a wider audience due to their location in the public urban landscape. This, in turn, helps create public awareness, dialogue, and connection to issues that demand attention from communities and from broader society (Lettieri & Tanguma 2001). In this aspect, determining the intended audience of a mural is important in deciding where a mural should be placed. For instance, a mural that is meant to inspire the community internally would probably be painted in more intimate locations compared to a mural that is meant to amplify a community's concerns to an external audience. This paper plans to address this relationship of mural content/messaging to spatial conditions further, as murals can often be elevated through their dynamic and thoughtful use of space.

Benefits of Mural Art

On top of their democratic nature, murals also benefit society in many other ways. Fundamentally, murals bring art of all forms and intentions directly to the people, transforming public streets and spaces into art galleries, promoting art literacy, and inspiring creativity and ideation. They beautify and restore public spaces, making them more vibrant, interesting, and welcoming, and making urban life more enjoyable. In turn, the attraction of artful streets has the potential to encourage environmental and social benefits.

If people are drawn to see outdoor murals, then people are encouraged to spend more time outdoors, and perhaps motivated to gather around the art, explore the area, or change their commute (e.g., use slower forms of transportation, like walking or biking, or alter paths) to enjoy the artwork. With this potential response, artful streets can make streets livelier, promote more sustainable, healthier living, and increase opportunities for social interaction. Moreover, with a greater number of people on the streets for the art, this presence could contribute to safer streets and reduced crime based on Jane Jacobs' "eyes on the street" theory (1961). In other words, streets not only become livelier, but also more protected as people are drawn to gather and mingle on artful streets, strengthening social cohesion and security.

Murals also have the potential to create or bolster a sense of place and identity to a community, a neighborhood, or even a city. In the modern age, many U.S. city districts and suburban areas were developed quickly, with little embellishment in favor of cost-effectiveness and efficiency. Consisting of similar looking residential and commercial areas separated by parking lots, connected by highways, and dotted with similar vegetation (oaks, maples, and evergreen shrubs), many of these places essentially become the "geographies of nowhere", as Kunstler has described (1993). In other words, anyone could be teleported from one U.S. urban or suburban landscape to another thousands of miles away and not even notice a difference due to the copy-and-paste architecture. In these places that lack unique visual character and cues, murals can be a cost-effective solution to the monotony. Murals can highlight local landmarks, local figures, or even become a local landmark themselves. Murals can also be designed or adapted to the local style and culture, creating a sense of place by adding visual distinction, displaying community personality, and reinforcing identity. This artistic approach through

muralism can engender community pride and investment, reminding locals and advertising to others what is special about the place.

Along with a sense of place, murals also move people to develop senses of belonging, ownership, and empowerment for communities. For instance, when centering on and visually interpreting community values, like inclusion and unity, murals can help community members feel like they belong, build community solidarity, and make visitors feel welcomed. Direct messages of encouragement or images of locally admired leaders can inspire and motivate positive thinking and response. Also, providing images that directly reflect the community identity, especially underrepresented communities, can allow residents to feel they can claim their space and assert their identity. Sometimes, murals can expand beyond engendered feelings and lead people to action. The *Wall of Respect* in Chicago was a mural example of this, having been made and maintained by the Black community for the Black community from 1967-1971. It became a “rallying point for the community”, to preserve the neighborhood of color and stall city plans of demolition and urban renewal (Cockcroft et al. 1977). Although the mural was lost to a fire, the art initiated a movement by bringing community members together to serve a greater purpose, which inspired other mural movements across the U.S. (Cockcroft et al. 1977).

Murals can play a role in the theory of “free spaces”, which are described as public community places where people are “able to learn new self-respect, a deeper more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue” (Evans & Boyte 1986). Mural walls serve as free spaces when they accurately reflect a community’s concerns, hopes, progress, traditions, and values (Delgado & Barton 1998). Intimate or relevant themes like these can inspire a sense of purpose for someone who might feel lost in their social identity, which can help channel energies in productive directions (Marschall 1999). Murals that enhance free spaces

help people embrace their communities, which benefits the individual, the community, and broader society. From emphasizing a place's value to reminding others of who inhabits and influences a community, murals serve as a marker of where one feels welcomed and empowered.

In terms of education, both mural art and the process of mural art making have pedagogical purpose to the public and the community. Viewers of a mural can learn from the content of the mural itself, whether it is depicting a historic event or person, showcasing important cultural traditions and symbols, or teaching how to better care for one's community. In the U.S., education through murals becomes especially important in marginalized communities whose histories and cultures have been ignored, oppressed, misrepresented, or disrespected in mainstream media (Lettieri & Tanguma 2001). Murals can help ensure the preservation of a community's intangible culture and heritage through visual representation, memorialization, and messaging (Martinez-Carazo et al. 2021). Furthermore, murals can raise awareness and inform on socio-political and economic issues that are important to the community, but are obscure due to the community's minority status or the topic's threat to societal norms. Thus, murals have the capacity to improve and expand understanding, perspectives, and knowledge about a wide range of issues, but most significantly for underrepresented issues or themes (Conrad 1995).

Additionally, there are opportunities for art education, cultural and historical connection, and community engagement and planning when the community is directly involved in the mural making process. In this form of participatory design, community members can be invited to, or can be the initiators and leaders of, a community mural project. Through the process of planning, designing, installing, and maintaining the mural, involved community members can learn more about their community and/or the topic they are artistically representing, develop interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, and strengthen community connections. Mural making

can help people gain knowledge, skills, and relationships that can further personal development and collective community growth.

Lastly, muralism has the potential to support the local economy of a community, mainly through tourism and revitalization. Studies have shown that murals allow for the expansion of tourism beyond typical tourist hubs, as muralism is an easy and affordable method to beautify places that need restoration and transform them into sights-to-see (Martinez-Carazo et al. 2021; de Miguel Molina et al. 2020). Essentially, these public murals and artful streets can become cultural and artistic attractions for people to visit, and once people are drawn to the area, they then may be tempted to explore the neighborhood, visit other local sites, and support nearby restaurants, cafes, stores, or other small businesses. Additionally, with today's selfie and social media culture, famous, eye-catching murals can do more than just attract people for patronage or photographs, but also help advertise businesses, events, and cultural districts through people's online postings and hashtags.

Murals also provide the economic benefit of aesthetic improvements that improves overall urban life. In other words, murals can help revitalize declining city areas by giving visual cues that these places are receiving interest and investment to improve their conditions. Consequently, this beautification through artistic investment can encourage further investment from other entities taking advantage of the site's potential financial growth, plus attract new residents and consumers. In pursuing this type of economic development, neighborhoods, districts, or cities can allow for a more diversified and decentralized economy as attractive streets become more ubiquitous and distribute visiting tourists, opportunistic investors, and local consumers to new city enclaves (Martinez-Carazo et al. 2021). Economic growth from muralism

is an exciting, although nascent, trend, but it is one that is receiving a lot of attention for its notable success in many cities and city districts.

Altogether, murals can beautify, advocate, revitalize, educate, represent, and inspire. They can serve many goals and provide a wide range of direct and indirect benefits. Most importantly, they have historically served marginalized communities, and continue to do so today, by democratizing art, challenging social and aesthetic standards, and expanding perspectives through visuals, process, and claiming of space. In defining how “successful” a mural is, it is important to realize that each mural has its unique goals, as well as unintended consequences, based on creative drive, social desires, or economic ventures. These goals and consequences, and whether they were accomplished, can even be perceived differently by the artist, the commissioner, the viewer, etc. Overall, public murals intend to bring interest to a space and to be seen by the public. With the many possibilities for valuable impact, muralism can be a compellingly creative tool for the design and engagement of public spaces.

Issues in Mural Art

Like most tools in design, murals are not a panacea to community needs and can unfortunately have negative effects. First, it must be noted that although the positive impacts of murals can be a catalyst to achieving many community, social, economic, and artistic goals, these effects can be limited and short-term (Marschall 1999). Most long-lasting changes to living conditions and socio-political issues need the added interventions of government policy, financial investment, and public engagement to be effective and enduring (de Miguel Molina et al. 2020). However, murals still have great influence on communities, as described in the previous section and as proven by other studies (Marschall 1999; Cordeiro et al. 2012; Adams

2020) by providing visual attraction, enrichment, and motivation. Like any other artform, though, the impacts of murals should be considered within realistic reasoning.

Alternatively, the positive aesthetic effects of muralism can be effective to the point that they lead to negative effects on existing communities through gentrification or over-tourism. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, gentrification is “a form of neighborhood change that occurs when higher-income groups move into low-income areas” (2016), which raises living costs and leads to displacement of long-time residents and businesses who can no longer afford to reside in the area. Similarly, over-tourism is another phenomenon referring to the influx of people leading to undesirable effects; it is differentiated as an excessive number of tourists that can cause physical, ecological, social, economic, psychological, or political strains to the local community and, thus, decrease the standard of living (Peeters et al. 2018). Therefore, with the use of murals as a strategy to beautify urban streets and spaces, making them an attraction, their aesthetic and economic benefits run the risk of becoming detrimental to the existing community.

In confronting these risks, it is first important to ensure the development of mural art is in line with the community goals and the design and location of the murals work for the intended audience. If a mural is designed and installed with the community involved or in mind, then it may better serve the community’s needs for claim of space, placemaking, and assertion of identity rather than attracting people who appropriate the space (Jarman 1998). This could involve developing mural visual content and/or determining a mural location that serves the purpose of either being art for a local or external audience. If preventing gentrification and over-tourism is a priority, but there is still a risk after considering mural impacts, then appropriate

measures beyond design should be considered and implemented to address these issues, including strategies in policy and planning.

Another concern with mural art is their long-term maintenance and preservation. To be available to a wider public audience, murals mainly need to be on outdoor surfaces, exposing them to environmental elements, like sun, rain, humidity, vegetation, and pollution. Mural longevity is also highly dependent on changes to building ownership, demolition, and new construction (Salim 2017). One of the more controversial threats to mural integrity is vandalism, which most often occurs when unpermitted graffiti is painted over an existing mural. This becomes a debated issue, as unpermitted graffiti, or any other guerrilla art form, is not always perceived as negative or unwelcomed, but this will be discussed later in this section. With all these threats to mural preservation, the ultimate issue for many mural projects is that they are typically a one-time financial and labor investment without much planning for future care of the mural. Therefore, it seems that preserving mural art might be one of the biggest challenges to the art form.

However, to counter this issue of mural integrity, there are many artists and critics who consider muralism as a form of ephemeral art. There are some murals around the world that are maintained and preserved, including the cave paintings of prehistoric eras or the frescos of the Italian Renaissance. Most modern-day outdoor murals, though, are made with the idea that they will not last forever, which arguably plays into their democratic nature. Murals are often designed to reflect or challenge the current ideas, concerns, and values of the people around them. Therefore, thanks to their temporal relevance and adaptability, murals can be updated, replaced, removed, or left to fade away to better respond to changing demographics, perspectives, and cultures of communities and society (Bae 2016). Also, referring to mural art's

catalytic nature to lead to grander, more in-depth socio-political or economic change, it seems appropriate that mural themes would evolve abreast with the progress of or changes within a community.

Now, for the purpose of this paper, mural and graffiti art will be differentiated.

Fundamentally, murals and graffiti are both public paintings done on surfaces and walls, and to some artists the line between the two art forms are blurred. According to societal conventions, one main distinction is that graffiti is associated with vandalism and crime, as it is done without the permission of the property owner. However, it is interesting to note that some communities, often the more affluent, even view commissioned murals as undesirable, fearing that mural art will devalue their property and harm the “clean” character of their neighborhoods. On the other hand, there are some forms of graffiti that are received as desirable artwork, like the works of Banksy and Shephard Fairey or sites like Atlanta, Georgia’s Krog Street Tunnel or Ann Arbor, Michigan’s Graffiti Alley. Today, more people are starting to accept a wider range of public art (Mohd Shobri et al. 2017) and allow spaces for public self-expression, but there are still battles fought over what is considered acceptable art in public spaces.

A more notable difference between muralism and graffiti comes from their production processes and transparency (Bates 2014). Regarding production, and as stated previously, murals tend to be more collaborative and open, especially with the artist needing permission from the property owner to paint their art. In this process, the artist must communicate their intentions and be more considerate as to what images and themes are permitted by other stakeholders, direct (e.g., property owner, users of the property) and indirect (e.g., the wider community, passers-by). This can entail a slower process of research, consulting, and negotiation to determine what is

most appropriate for the mural design, plus the installation can be an opportunity for publicity, education, and engagement.

In contrast, the nature of graffiti tends to be more individualistic and hidden. Without seeking permission, the themes and messages in graffiti can be more bold or controversial, which has the potential to be more ground-breaking in terms of artistic expression and challenging to social norms (Hou 2020). However, this implies that the art is more self-serving for the artist's agenda, whether for good or bad intentions, and narrower in perspective. Furthermore, since graffiti is illegal in most cities, its process must be covert, thus it lacks community involvement and the benefits that come with this engagement. One example of self-centered graffiti art is tagging, which is the marking of property with an artistic moniker or symbol and is often used more for marking territory or advertising one's artistic influence in an area. In some cases, tagging is even used by local graffiti artists to cover murals that are ill-received, done without local approval, or done by an outside artist who does not have local support.

Graffiti is still an important and valuable type of art for society and self-expression as it challenges what is considered art, who is considered an artist, and how art should be made. However, graffiti does not have the same process or transparency as permitted murals. Therefore, for the sake of this project and to not complicate the results, only mural art that was permitted or commissioned by the property owner will be considered. Graffiti art and tagging will only be referred to in relation to murals as an aspect of spatial conditions.

Lastly, another visual installation that affects muralism is the use of corporate product advertisements disguised as murals. Private companies have the money and resources to buy spaces (often good real-estate for high viewership), commission painters, and install advertising murals, which often have the style of artistic murals but with product placement or marketing

visuals. It is a controversial practice and seen by many as the appropriation of a public and creative art form (MacDonald 2019) for commercial use and the promotion of consumerism. The rise of corporate mural advertisements can be viewed as leading to the decline of opportunities for community-centered or issue-led murals, the distortion of and distraction from valued of public murals, as well as a threat to the overall integrity of muralism as democratic art. Some muralists have even pledged to avoid commercial commissions altogether, while some municipalities have prohibited corporate advertising from public mural campaigns (MacDonald 2019; Hooper 2018). However, the practice continues today as there is often more money in corporate mural advertisement and corporations view mural art as a clever way to advertise their products in new spaces.

Placemaking and Muralism

Some of the first concepts in placemaking began in the 1960s when writers, like Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte, started theorizing design approaches focused on the welfare of the people rather than for general development and urban/suburban growth. It is unknown who coined the actual name placemaking, but in the 1970s the term started appearing in design practice. Placemaking was seemingly a response to the mid-1900's modernist movement, which valued minimalism, functionality, and universality and sought science-based, expert-driven design approaches. In modernism, designs of spaces tended to be cleaner and more simplistic, and to some they were critiqued as monotonous or lacking ties to context. Proponents of placemaking wanted to re-prioritize people and place, bringing back an arguably less streamlined approach to design, but one that encouraged input from all and meaningful connections to the locality.

Nowadays, as placemaking has been studied and applied for several decades, there are more supported theories behind the practice. One theory has been developed by the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a non-profit organization that has been researching and working on placemaking projects since 1975. Their theory is the Eleven Principles for Creating Great Community Places, which are listed as follows:

1. The Community is the Expert. Local people have knowledge, insights, and understandings of where they live, which outsiders lack. Locals know what is most meaningful to them and what would work best for their community.
2. Create a Place, Not a Design. One cannot just design some components (e.g., a playground, a walking path, a sitting area) and not consider how they interrelate to each other to create a cohesive place. In considering all parts of a design, then one can better understand how a community will feel comfort, security, and meaning from a place.
3. Look for Partners. They can be private and public entities that provide support for the project at certain stages or throughout its development.
4. You Can See a Lot Just by Observing. One can tell what works or does not work in a public space by looking at how people respond to it (i.e., how they are using or not using it). These assessments help inform next steps to fill what is missing, improve what is not working, or maintain what is appreciated.
5. Have a Vision. The vision is unique to each community, accounting for the activities and perceptions of the place. However, it should always strive to create a sense of pride for the people who are a part of the community.
6. Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper. Start placemaking projects with short-term, less costly improvements to see what works and what to build upon.

7. Triangulate. Strategically place amenities to encourage usage and social interaction.
8. They Always Say “It Can’t Be Done”. There are always obstacles and naysayers in creating places, but these should not be deterrents from taking on a design challenge.
9. Form Supports Function. All the previous considerations will inform what form is needed to lead to successful function of the space. (Project for Public Spaces & Madden 2000)
10. Money Is Not the Issue. When applying all previous principles, then design becomes less expensive. Furthermore, engaged and partnered people will be excited enough for the project that cost will not matter compared to the benefits.
11. You Are Never Finished. Places are ever evolving. Be open, prepared, but flexible, for change and adaptation.

Many of these placemaking principles are very much relevant to mural making, as murals need community consultation, partnerships, and a vision to be successful. Concurrently, muralism is a tool for placemaking, being a “lighter, quicker, cheaper” way to enhance public spaces. They help define places with their visual content, strengthen the function of public spaces as socially engaging hubs, and support triangulation by typically serving as an additional attraction to something that is already existing. They also follow the placemaking principle of never being finished; murals are most often ephemeral, adaptive art in public spaces, and, in placemaking, they can respond to new developments in the community or in the environment.

Additionally, through the evaluation of thousands of public spaces around the world, the PPS organization has also found four common qualities that make placemaking successful: 1) accessible, 2) there are engaging activities, 3) the space is comfortable and has a good image, and 4) it is a sociable place (Figure 2.1). After discussing the benefits of muralism, it is clear that

murals have the potential to support all of these qualities. Thus, muralism can provide one approach to placemaking and be a major contributor to the success of placemaking projects. Therefore, it is important to explore what, why, and how mural visual, spatial, and contextual characteristics lead to more successful placemaking.

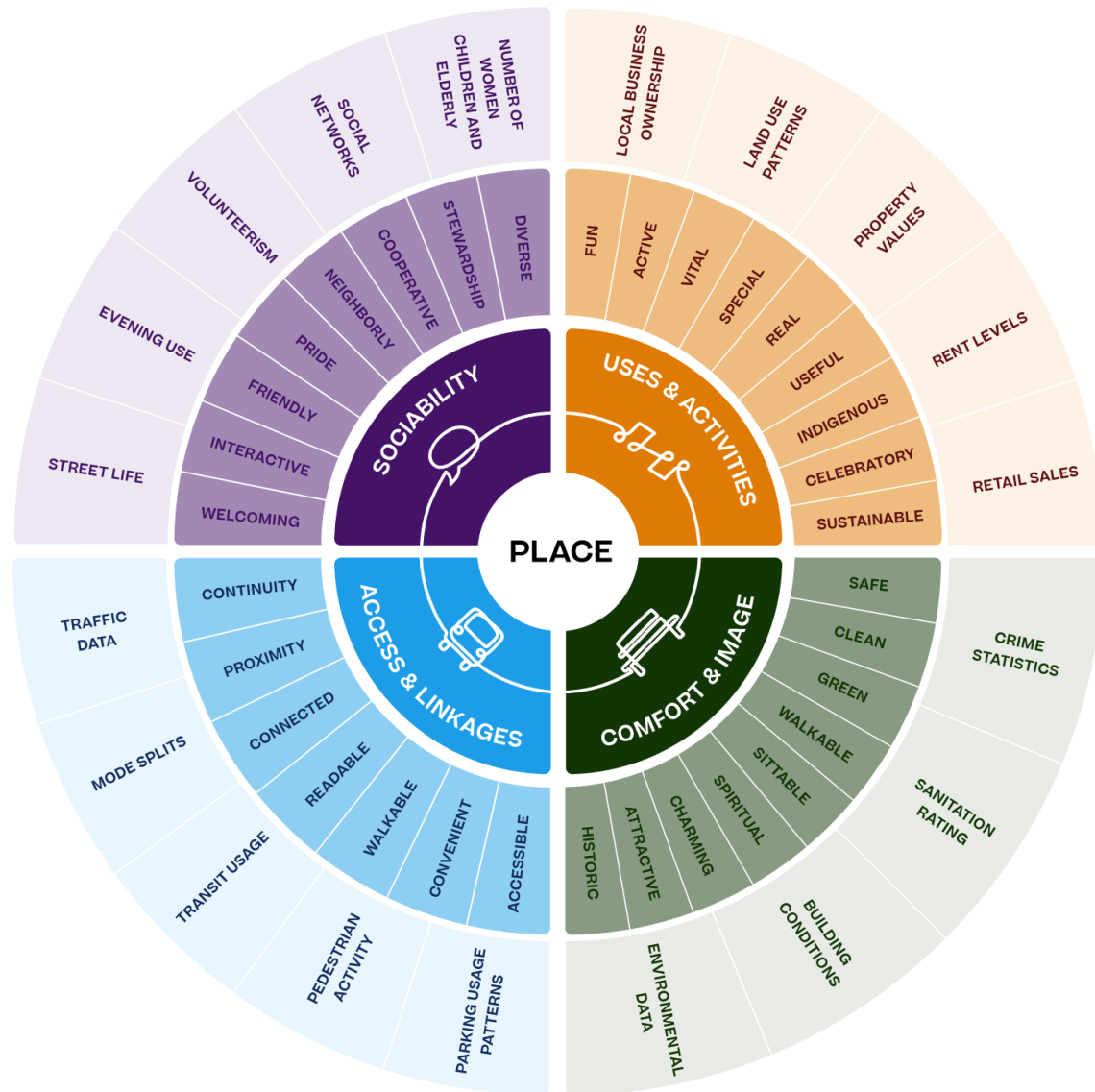


Figure 2.1: The Place Diagram – a tool to judge whether placemaking is successful (PPS, 2015)

Current Mural Art Movements in the U.S.

Muralism in the U.S. started with communities of color and their intentions to represent and claim identity, culture, and public space. Although, mural art is still most prevalent among communities and artists of color, who use it for its democratic and accessible nature, mural programs are becoming more integrated with the plans of municipal governments, city developers and planners, nonprofit organizations, and design professionals. Most cities today with a thriving mural scene have official organizations that help support, fund, manage, preserve, and advertise their mural art. However, there has not been a standard way that cities or organizations approach their mural art movements.

On the high-end of civic involvement, some city governments have established robust public programs to support mural work and engagement throughout their metropolitan areas. One of these cities is Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which is known for having the highest number of murals in the U.S. and has one of the most extensive municipal mural programs called Mural Arts Philadelphia. This program is led by an executive director and twelve staff members, maintains a website with catalogued information on the murals, and provides public details on mural tours, events, ancillary programs, and applications for mural proposals. This program has inspired other cities, like Detroit, Michigan, to follow this model in the hopes to create their own successful local mural art movements and make art more accessible. At mid-level involvement, there are city governments that either have established parts of a mural program or implemented short-term mural initiatives under their cultural and arts departments. Some examples are Chicago, Illinois and Los Angeles, California creating official mural registries for the preservation of their public murals, or Eugene, Oregon creating a campaign to install at least 20 new murals before the 2022 World Athletics Championships. However, most commonly and at

the minimum, municipal culture and art offices officially recognize murals as a valued form of public art and often offer public art funding opportunities through grants.

Additionally, in most cities that have a flourishing mural arts movement, there are also private or nonprofit organizations who either fill the gaps of support for city mural movements or even help lead the movements themselves. Of course, city approval and encouragement of public art can be crucial to the success of muralism in cities as it makes the art form more accessible and accepted. However, nongovernmental organizations typically have the ability to explore different funding strategies, work more closely with certain communities and causes, and experiment with how to encourage art access, collaboration, or support. This freedom from bureaucracy allows private and nonprofit organizations to support city muralism in many unique and influential ways, including creating mural location maps, forming muralist cooperatives, assisting under-resourced communities in muralism, organizing neighborhood mural tours, photographing murals, hosting mural festivals, and recording mural information.

With more institutionalized mural movements, it can be argued that muralism can be more controlled, censored, or even suppressed to fit the framework and agendas of formal organizations or city governments (Hou 2020), stifling the art form and its previously described purpose and values to serve marginalized communities. However, with increased investment and promotion from these formal groups, there has been increased opportunities and resources for muralism. Subsequently, this has accelerated the popularity and development of mural movements within U.S. cities, even within underprivileged communities. Furthermore, most cities' mural collections seem to exhibit a wide array of topics and visuals, ranging from themes that are generically positive to those that challenge mainstream perspectives. This can be attributed to the increased variety of stakeholders contributing and supporting muralism, and the

broader societal awareness and movement towards social equity and justice in urban areas.

Today, people of different backgrounds and statuses, ranging from city officials to neighborhood residents, from design professionals to local artists, and from art educators to community leaders, can now bring their diverse perspectives, knowledge, and skills to the art form and create a more inclusive and expansive mural art movement.

Previous Studies on Mural Spatial Conditions

Existing literature on murals in urban areas tends to focus on analyzing content, identity, and representation and how these factors relate to community culture, values, and history (Lettieri & Tanguma 2001; Fitzman 2013; Moss 2010). There are also various papers addressing the connection of murals to socio-political issues, art preservation, engagement and empowerment, and economic development (Conrad 1995; Poon 2016; Addario 2020). However, studies on mural spatial conditions and how these conditions relate to art content, community value, and placemaking are limited. This is perhaps due to the emphasis placed on murals as a 2-dimensional art form used for visual beautification, communication, or representation, rather than how it occupies and interacts with its physical context.

What has been published so far on muralism and space has supported the argument that spatial conditions can be just as important to mural interpretation, value, and impact as the content of the mural. From one case study of East Los Angeles' murals there were many interesting findings based on a spatial-thematic analysis (Salim 2017). The study found that locations that needed the most attention for social empowerment and aesthetic improvement, like public housing projects, received the greatest number of murals, while locations that appeared to be culturally neutral (e.g., manufacturing areas) tended to have murals that were culturally

neutral. Moreover, it saw that spatial conditions have the potential to reveal community reception of murals (e.g., spaces that had less graffiti vandalism often had murals that depicted images of value to the community). This case study hinted that mural placement and content can be strongly influenced by its direct location, responding to the character of the neighborhood area it is in, rather than the neighborhood as a whole. It also showed that the treatment of murals and their location can be indicative to their value and connection to the community. These conclusions allude to murals serving as a responding factor to spatial conditions, as well as spatial conditions serving as a signal to community response.

A 1998 study of Northern Ireland's political public art reviewed murals as objects in space, regardless of their content. It asserted that thoughtful placement of murals can be enough to imply definition, segregation, resistance, and challenge of boundaries, groups of people, and trail creation. Thus, this implication can give mural locations power and meaning, helping to form space, create or destroy barriers, and deter or encourage connection (Jarman).

Both of these studies are noteworthy when it comes to looking at other neighborhoods' mural art and seeing how it responds to the community, and vice versa. This paper will be more comparative to Salim's 2017 study of East Los Angeles' murals, as content will also be analyzed along with its ties to space and the community of Atlanta's Castleberry Hill. Moreover, in terms of spatial conditions and community context, this paper will focus on mural location, spatial quality, and access. Overall, addressing the content, spatial, and community relationships of murals hopes to provide supportive information on the importance of these relationships and how they can improve future mural developments in urban communities.

CHAPTER 3

AN OVERVIEW OF CASTLEBERRY HILL

City of Atlanta's Mural Trend

Before focusing on the neighborhood, Castleberry Hill, it is necessary to introduce its surrounding context, as the neighborhood's mural movement is directly influenced by and integrated with Atlanta's overall mural development. Castleberry Hill is considered a part of downtown Atlanta, which is quickly developing a reputation for public art and muralism. According to Art Rudick, an Atlanta resident who archives the city's murals on his public website Atlanta Street Art Map, Atlanta reached over 1,000 murals in 2020 (Figure 3.1). This impressive number of murals is comparable to other U.S. mural hotspots, like Philadelphia, San Francisco, and New York City. Similar to these cities, Atlanta's murals cover a spectrum of topics, themes, and purposes, but many of them are still connected to issues of social, political, and racial representation, equity, and justice. The majority of these murals were also installed within the last ten to fifteen years through the efforts of many local, national, and international artists and the support of both private and public entities.

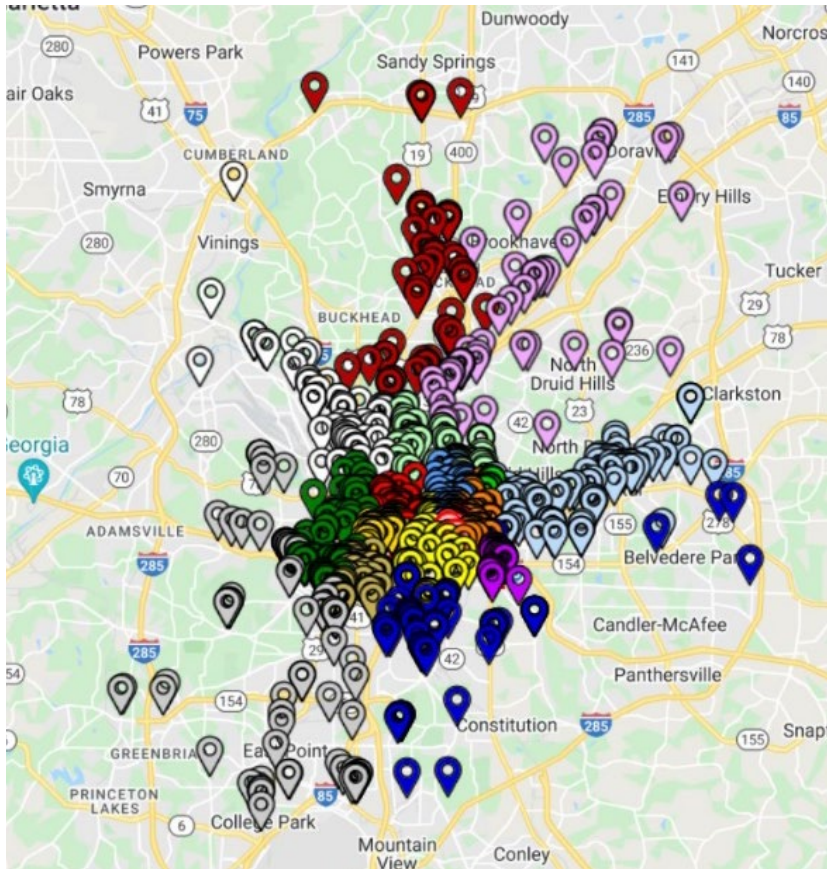


Figure 3.1: Map of Mural Locations in Atlanta according to Atlanta Street Art Map website (Rudick, 2022)

There are many institutions, organizations, and businesses supporting Atlanta's public murals and mural artists. For instance, on a governmental level, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Atlanta Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, and the Fulton County Board of Commissioners directly support and fund Atlanta's largest public art program, Art on the Atlanta Beltline. The original Atlanta Beltline project was established in the early 2000s as an effort to convert a former city railway corridor into an urban redevelopment and trail network that promotes green spaces and neighborhood connections. In 2010, Art on the Atlanta Beltline was added as an ancillary program to encourage people to further explore the Beltline and to increase the accessibility of city art (Atlanta Beltline Inc.). The program publicly showcases many forms of outdoor art, including sculptures, live performances, and, of course, murals. The Atlanta

Beltline currently has over 100 murals along its trails and in its green spaces. These mural locations and photos of current and past murals are recorded on the official Art on the Atlanta Beltline website, which helps promote the artwork to the public while also tracking the mural program's development and public impact.

Atlanta also has local private organizations, like Living Walls and The Loss Prevention, which are run by artists whose goals are to transform the city through public art and social engagement. These private groups often have their own initiatives and approaches to muralism. Living Walls tends to serve as the liaison between artists, funding, and the receiver of the murals and, although they are based in Atlanta, they take on many projects around the country and the world. On the other hand, The Loss Prevention is more of a cooperative of local artists to make connections within Atlanta to support and create murals. These organizations have collaborated directly with residents, businesses, and other nonprofits to install murals throughout the Atlanta Metropolitan Area, rather than in one concentrated location, like Art on the Beltline.

Outside of these organizations, there are also mural campaigns, including the Off the Wall project led by the Super Bowl LIII Atlanta Host Committee and the former Atlanta art nonprofit group, WonderRoot. This campaign created over thirty new murals throughout downtown Atlanta between 2018 and 2019. It was an effort to highlight the city's civil rights legacy and its commitment to social justice leading up to the 2019 Atlanta Super Bowl, making it a short-term, but aesthetically and socially impactful project. Also, there are public art events that happen every year. One is the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs' ELEVATE, which, since 2011, has served as a temporary art program that hosts visual art, performances, and cultural events in different parks of Atlanta. Some of the artwork from ELEVATE, including murals, is then adopted by local property owners and businesses as permanent pieces. A private group that

hosts annual art events is Outer Space Project, which organizes an event series in the East Atlanta neighborhood. Murals are produced by a variety of artists throughout the neighborhood, then there is a celebration for the muralists, organizers, volunteers, and the public with musical performances, art auctions, interactive activities, and art exhibits. Efforts like these are periodic, but still provide a boost in Atlanta's muralism.

Lastly, private residents and business owners are also involved in the city's mural movement, finding ways to enhance their own properties and spaces, connect with artists, and, sometimes, engage their neighbors to create murals that are more localized and specific to their community interests. With public entities, private organizations, and individuals all acting on Atlanta's mural movement, this robust support system has allowed murals to develop throughout the city's 242 neighborhoods and to utilize a variety of themes and purposes. In this way, Atlanta's mural movement has been widespread and for multiple agendas, rather than concentrated and/or topic selective, making it more accessible, representative, and democratic for the city's diverse population and communities.

Most groups that are involved in Atlanta's mural trend keep track of their mural work through photographs on their websites or social media platforms. However, not all information about these murals (e.g., location, artist) is given through these sources. Moreover, murals made on a more individual and/or private level usually do not have a specific platform for archival or promotion. Therefore, Rudick's Atlanta Street Art Map website (<https://streetartmap.org/>) helps fill this gap by providing a centralized mural guide and catalogue, which not only provides current information about the murals and their locations, but even maps out optimized mural tour routes to encourage visitations. This website is a valuable resource to support Atlanta's mural

movement, to engender more interest in muralism, and, of course, to help with the data collection of this study.

Regarding this study, Atlanta's large number of murals, plus the wide range of mural themes, makes the task of finding, observing, and analyzing all the city's murals enormous and challenging. Furthermore, Atlanta's over 200 neighborhoods are each unique in history, physical layout, social demographics, economic status, and mural involvement, making the study between mural content, spatial conditions, and neighborhood/community relations even more complicated. Therefore, this paper chose to focus on the Castleberry Hill neighborhood and its murals to limit the scope of research and allow for more in-depth analysis of the mural, space, and community relationships (Figure 3.2). As previously stated, Castleberry Hill was chosen for this case study as it is a relatively small neighborhood in downtown Atlanta, but with a thriving mural scene, a rich history, and an interesting demographic status. The following sections of this chapter will elaborate on these fascinating attributes of the Castleberry Hill neighborhood.



Figure 3.2: Location of Castleberry Hill within the Atlanta city limits (by author)

Castleberry Hill's Mural Trend

The popularity of murals in Atlanta seemingly began in the early 2010s with the establishment of Art on the Beltline program and the Living Walls organization, two separate entities, but both with similar goals of supporting more public art. Although the Atlanta Beltline connects and provides art for several city neighborhoods, Castleberry Hill is not one of them, since the Beltline trail loops through areas outside of the neighborhood. However, with the conversion of dilapidated, lackluster spaces into attractive, artistic public galleries, the success of Art on the Beltline proved the value of murals and inspired the mural movement to expand beyond its trail into areas like Castleberry Hill. In fact, Castleberry Hill's first murals came into fruition soon after Art on the Atlanta Beltline's inaugural year in 2010, and the majority of the neighborhood's current murals were produced within the last five years. Moreover, Living Walls began its mural work in 2010, with one of its first murals painted on Castleberry Hill's Walker Street Mini Storage. This mural has since been replaced with a mural that is more relevant to the neighborhood's history and community (Figure 3.3), but this location and its surroundings are still a hotspot for murals within the neighborhood. Overall, even without the federal and city funding and support that comes from the Art on the Atlanta Beltline program, Castleberry Hill now hosts over forty murals, which are mostly catalogued by the Atlanta Street Art Map website.



Figure 3.3: Walker Street Mini Storage mural change. The top shows the original mural installed in 2010 with the support of Living Walls. The bottom shows the current mural, which was painted in 2015 by The Loss Prevention (by author).

In comparison, another neighborhood near downtown Atlanta that has seen success in its mural art is the historic Cabbagetown. Just like Castleberry Hill, Cabbagetown is recognized on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places and is considered one of Atlanta's oldest industrial settlements (Cabbagetown Neighborhood Improvement Association). This neighborhood had an informal start in public art in the 1960s when unauthorized graffiti art and taggings began appearing on a short underpass in the northeast part of the neighborhood. As an elevated railway line created a concrete border on Cabbagetown's northern edge, this underpass was one of only

two connections between Cabbagetown and its northern neighbor, Inman Park. Today, this underpass is known as the Krog Street Tunnel and is embraced by locals, tourists, and even filmmakers for its grungy, but artful appearance. It also serves as a segment of the Atlanta Beltline, leading Beltline users in and out of Cabbagetown

Similar to Castleberry Hill, Art on the Atlanta Beltline was seemingly a catalyst for the neighborhood's mural art movement, but for Cabbagetown, this effect was more profound due to its direct connection to the trail. Arguably, Krog Street Tunnel was an epicenter for Cabbagetown's murals, but as the Atlanta Beltline established its route through this underpass and continued parallel to the rail line (along the neighborhood's Wylie Street SE), this opened the door for Art on the Atlanta Beltline to use the railway infrastructure as a canvas for murals. Furthermore, this street is also the site of an annual local mural painting event that is hosted by Forward Warrior, supported by the Cabbagetown Neighborhood Improvement Association, and curated by Peter Ferrari. Now, Cabbagetown has over sixty murals, with the majority of Cabbagetown's murals along the neighborhood's portion of the Atlanta Beltline, while there are a few concentrations of murals in the neighborhood's commercialized areas. Moreover, Living Walls also helped provide Cabbagetown one of its first murals, which was located at the mouth of the Krog Street Tunnel.

Despite these similarities, Cabbagetown's murals and Castleberry Hill's murals have their differences that, from a quick comparison, seem to stem from two reasons. One is the community context influencing the mural content. In terms of content, many of Castleberry Hill's murals take direct inspiration from its ties to the Black community by centering Black people as the subject in many murals and providing empowering visuals and messages that directly speak to Black viewers. This can be interpreted as a reminder of Castleberry Hill's roots

as historically Black neighborhood, while also as a claim of space as the neighborhood continues to host many Black-owned businesses despite the threat of gentrification. On the other hand, Cabbagetown is considered an already gentrified neighborhood, one that experienced socio-economic change in the 1980s and is now considered stable but exclusive (Urban Displacement Project 2017). Although there are a few murals depicting people of color, it is not to the same extent or within the same framework of inspiring imagery as in Castleberry Hill’s muralism. Therefore, Cabbagetown’s more stable affluent context seems to have influenced more of its murals to focus on aesthetic appeal and creative expression (Figure 3.4) rather than representing the underrepresented, supporting socio-economic issues, or commemorating local leaders.

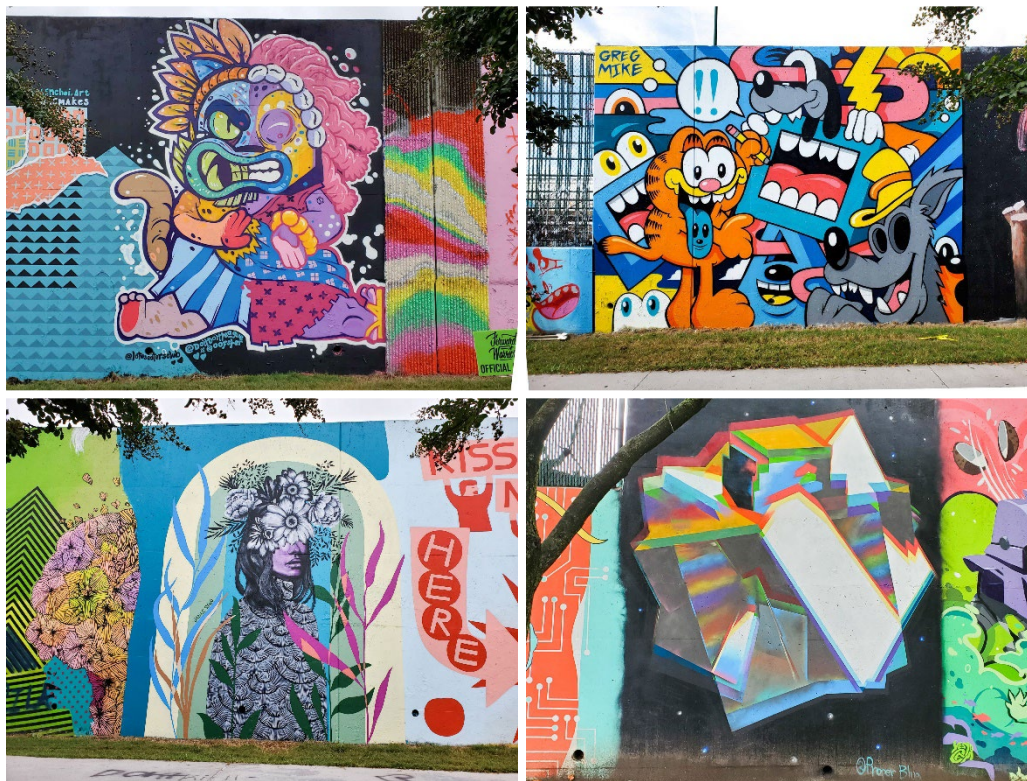


Figure 3.4: Examples of aesthetic/artistic murals in Cabbagetown. (Atlanta Street Art Map)

Secondly, Castleberry Hill's disconnection from the Atlanta Beltline has consequently allowed its murals to be created and supported by residents and business owners rather than a top-down, programmatic process. In other words, most of Castleberry Hill's murals were designed, developed, and inspired by the community itself, not imposed by an external program's vision and decision-making. However, this is not to say that the murals of Castleberry Hill were strictly internal developments. There was collaboration with many artists, both local and non-local, while some mural projects were supported by Atlantan organizations/campaigns, like Living Walls, The Loss Prevention, and the Off the Wall initiative. But this diversity of influence from multiple organizations under the neighborhood's guidance allowed for a diversity of mural content and themes within the Castleberry Hill community's consensus and objectives. In contrast, many of the murals in Cabbagetown were created within the Art on the Atlanta Beltline's purview. Although this expedited the development of muralism in the neighborhood and has allowed the neighborhood to have an increased number of murals, this process leaves less room for its mural development to progress along with the community and reflect this progression. Collaboration is also limited mainly between one organization's agenda and how this organization approaches mural making, which may limit the range of themes explored by the murals and the ways the community is involved.

All in all, Castleberry Hill's mural trend is both standard and unique in Atlanta's context. It is standard in terms of how its mural movement began soon after Art the Atlanta Beltline and Living Walls started their initiatives to promote and create murals as a way to benefit communities. However, Castleberry Hill's muralism stands out with its lack of physical connection to the Beltline, but current connection to the Black community, allowing for a variety

of organizations and stakeholders to become involved in the neighborhood's mural development and create a more locally focused, locally led mural movement.

Castleberry Hill's Neighborhood History

Founded in the early 1800s as one of Atlanta's earliest settlements, Castleberry Hill was influential to the city of Atlanta's establishment and growth as a major metropolitan area. Castleberry Hill's importance to Atlanta is based on its ties to the railroad, as one of the city's major railway lines ran through the neighborhood, shaping the neighborhood as a commercial and industrial center (Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association and David Butler & Associates 2000) (Figure 3.5). Although the neighborhood was named after one of its first settlers, Daniel Castleberry, it was briefly dubbed "Snake Nation" in the mid-1800s to refer to the crime and "immoral" behavior brought in by the railroad (Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association 2006). Eventually, this settlement of brothels, bars, and gambling houses was destroyed by group of city vigilantes who raided and burned down the neighborhood in a single night. This infamous period and the neighborhood's historic ties to the railroad are some of the inspirations to and subjects of murals currently on display in the Castleberry Hill.



Figure 3.5. Context map of Castleberry Hill and its railway line (by author)



Figure 3.6: Railroad yards, Atlanta, Georgia (Vintage Everyday Archive, 1864)

Soon after this upheaval, the Civil War also disrupted any major development in the Castleberry Hill. It was not until after the war when Atlanta began to re-assert itself as a regional railroad distribution center that Castleberry Hill started to regain momentum. Three main streets were established in Castleberry Hill: Peters Street, which had Atlanta's first horse-drawn trolley line and hosted most of the neighborhood's non-residential buildings; Walker Street, which had the neighborhood's school; and Nelson Street, which had Atlanta's first wooden trestle bridge that passed over the railroad (Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association 2006). In the late-1800s, the neighborhood began seeing an influx of Black citizens who mainly took residence along Walker and Nelson Streets as white people began moving away to newer parts of Atlanta's expanding city limits. Today, Peters Street and Walker Street serve as the main avenues for neighborhood traffic, small businesses, and residential apartments; thus, allowing significant mural development along these streets. Nelson Street receives relatively less traffic and engagement; however, it still provides a western entry point into the neighborhood, which has allowed murals to develop on the west end of the street (Figure 3.8)



Figure 3.7. Whitehall Street (now Peachtree Street) from Mitchell Street, the northeast border street of Castleberry Hill. The trolley line seen in the road would lead into Peters Street. (Vintage Everyday Archive, 1895)

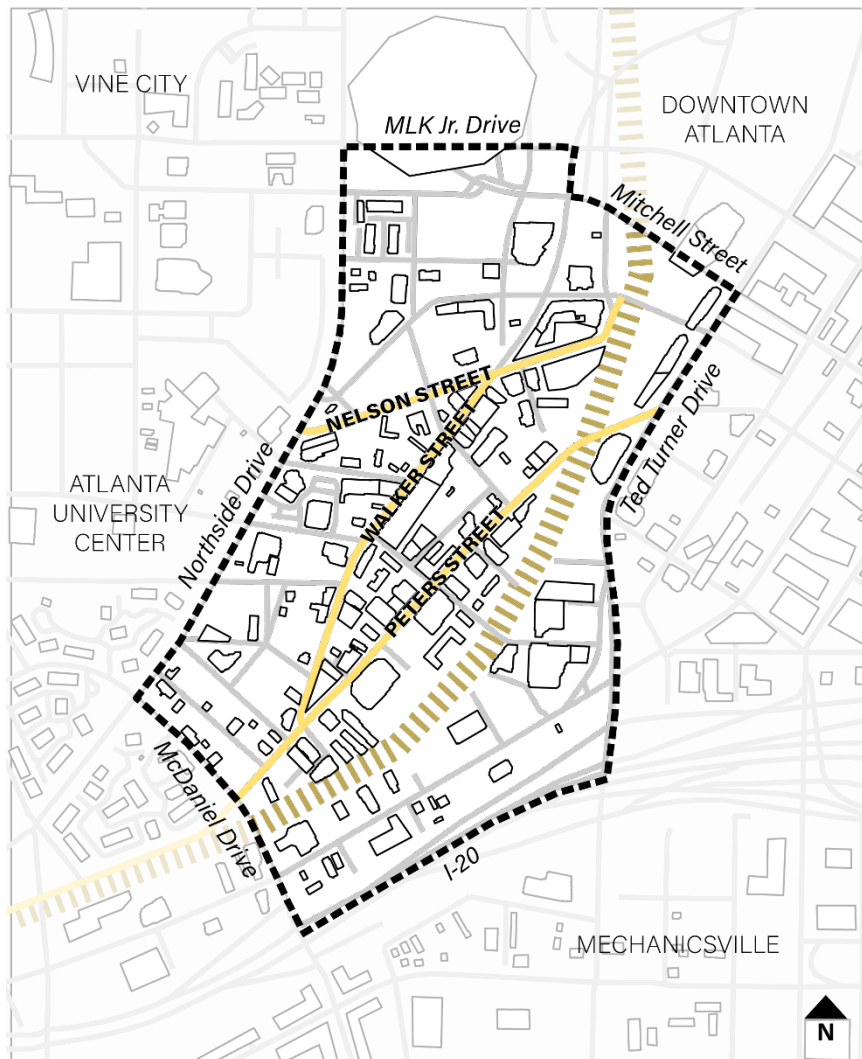


Figure 3.8: Map highlighting Castleberry Hill's historic streets (by author)

In the 20th century, Castleberry Hill experienced dramatic change as Atlanta grew into a major metropolis, and the neighborhood was located right in the middle of it. At first, this meant a shift of the city's downtown land use, changing residential areas into industrial and commercial hubs. Therefore, Castleberry Hill saw most of its housing replaced by warehouses and light manufacturing buildings, displacing many Black residents. Later, in the mid-1900s, the change in downtown Atlanta became even more disruptive as the city, like so many other U.S. city centers, experienced white flight. In other words, white people began moving to the suburbs and away from densely packed cities that were becoming more racially diverse. Castleberry Hill was no

exception; thus, business investment in the neighborhood declined, buildings were abandoned, and the once vibrant and bustling district deteriorated (Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association and David Butler & Associates 2000).

While the value of the area declined, one entrepreneur saw opportunity in Castleberry Hill. Herman J. Russell, now known as one of the country's most successful Black businessmen, began buying land in the neighborhood in the 1950s, committing to a vision of Castleberry Hill's future success. Ever since, the family-owned real estate business, H.J. Russell & Company, has capitalized on the neighborhood's economic potential and has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the development of Castleberry Hill. Their financial investment in the neighborhood has helped lead to a concentration of Black businesses and Black real estate ownership, the establishment of an innovation and entrepreneurship center, and the conversion of older neighborhood buildings into residential lofts and apartments (H. J. Russell & Company 2020). It has also spurred on the neighborhood's mural development, as one of the first murals in Castleberry Hill was on one of their properties, the Walker Street Mini Storage). Today, this property hosts three murals (and four in its history), and one of these murals even depicts Herman J. Russell as a tribute.

Since 1985, roughly forty acres of Castleberry Hill has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and, in 2006, this same area was designated as a City of Atlanta Landmark District (Atlanta Department of Planning & Community Development 2007) (Figure 3.9). This recognition was achieved as the neighborhood claims to have the largest concentration of historic railroad buildings in Atlanta that are unique to the time they were built and representative of unique architecture. Additionally, many parts of Castleberry Hill have qualified for city, county, and federal redevelopment and preservation initiatives, including, but not

limited to, the Ritz Ordinance, the Westside Tax Allocation District, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and Enterprise Zoning (Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association and David Butler & Associates 2000). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, parts of Castleberry Hill were deemed as Federal Empowerment Zones, which provided funding for the neighborhood's first ever master plan. This plan initiated an urban planning study of the neighborhood and a local commitment to boost the neighborhood economy, reduce crime, preserve the neighborhood history, and promote streetscapes, greenspaces, and public art (Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association and David Butler & Associates 2000).

Today, Castleberry Hill is recognized as a growing neighborhood with a developing commercial district. Along with the incoming investments, formal master planning, and attractive government incentives, another notable reason for this business growth was the 2017 completion of Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium, which sits on the northwest edge of the neighborhood and has encouraged more visitors and consumers to the area. However, most of the benefits of the stadium have concentrated in hospitality and tourist-centered businesses, while residents of Castleberry Hill have negatively dealt with an increase in automobile traffic, a decrease in parking availability and pedestrian safety, and a continued lack of resident-oriented businesses. Atlanta's 2017 Downtown Master Plan emphasized these issues by highlighting the importance of adding more residential services, improving pedestrian circulation, and supporting public art and wayfinding within the neighborhood to benefit overall quality of life. In encouraging residents to stay within the neighborhood for services, create more stimulating streets, and regulate traffic, this type of development has the potential to make Castleberry Hill more suitable for long-term residential living.

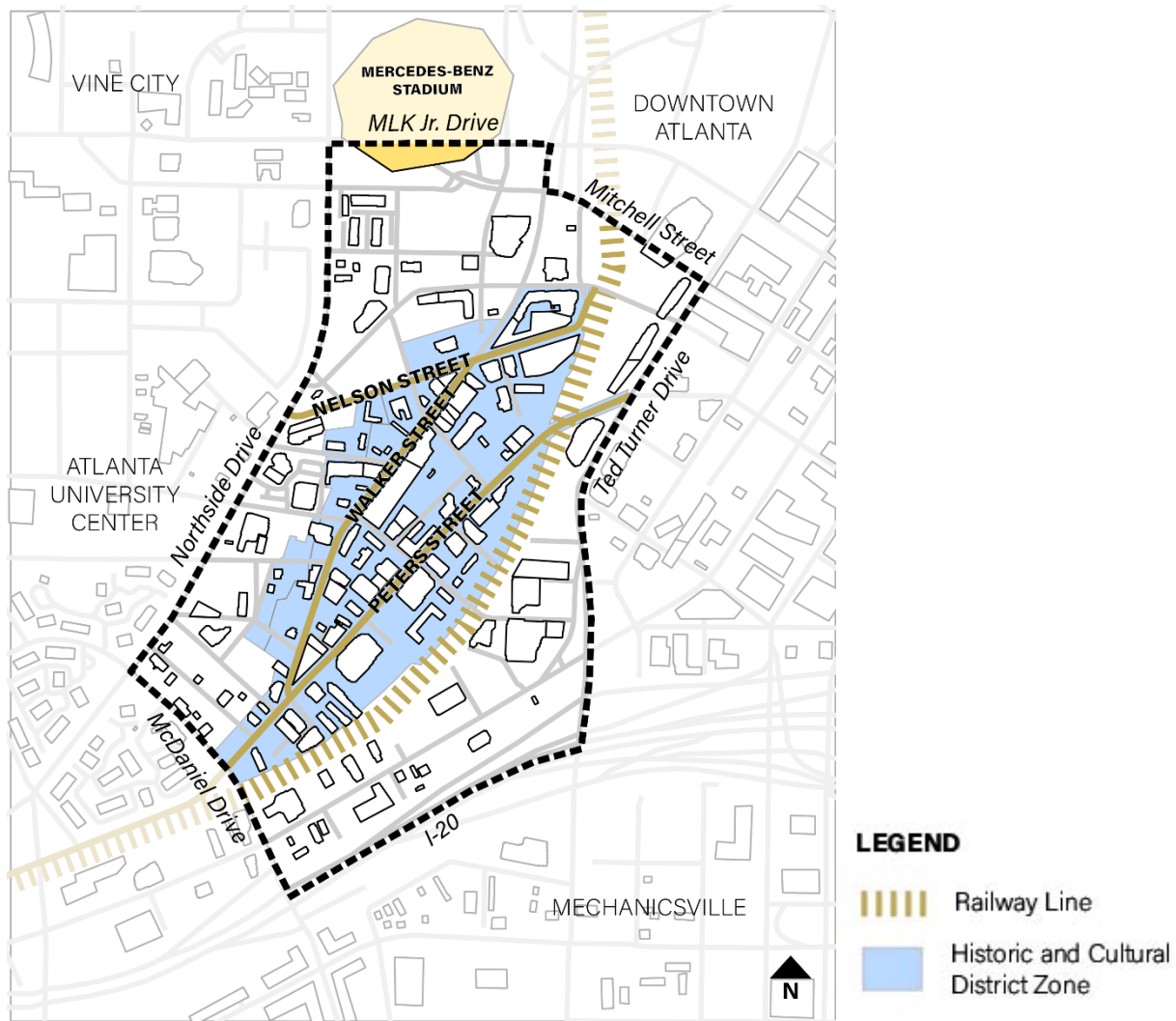


Figure 3.9 Map highlighting Castleberry Hill's Historic and Cultural Conservation District Zone and the Mercedes-Benz Stadium (by author)

In the meantime, more people are attracted to visit Castleberry Hill every day for its burgeoning small businesses and art scene. As the neighborhood becomes livelier, it also looks to preserve its historic roots, while offering a safe, engaging, and desirable environment to support its community. So far, murals have been a part of this strategy by displaying Castleberry Hill's history, showing community values, and aesthetically enhancing the neighborhood to make it more charming and welcoming.

Castleberry Hill's Current Demographic and Zoning Status

According to 2020 U.S. Census block data, Castleberry Hill has a total population of 1,706 residents. Castleberry Hill's residential population size has relatively remained the same since 1990 (then the population was 1,569), which could be attributed to the neighborhood's lack of residential services (e.g., grocery store, neighborhood clinic, etc.) to attract and sustain more long-term residents. However, its racial demographics and income status have notably changed in the last few decades. In 1990, the neighborhood's population was over 95 percent Black; in 2020, this number has dropped to around 64 percent. The Urban Displacement Project (UDP), a research group from the University of California Berkeley and the University of Toronto, has reported that parts of Castleberry Hill are at risk of or already experiencing gentrification (2017) (Figure 3.10). One of the neighborhood areas that is experiencing early gentrification is the northwest edge, closest to the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, which raises concerns of displacement of Black residents due to commercialization and increased property prices. Castleberry Hill's current mural collection does not directly critique the threat of gentrification, but many murals depict Black people, perhaps implying their right to belong, to be seen, and to remain in this neighborhood.

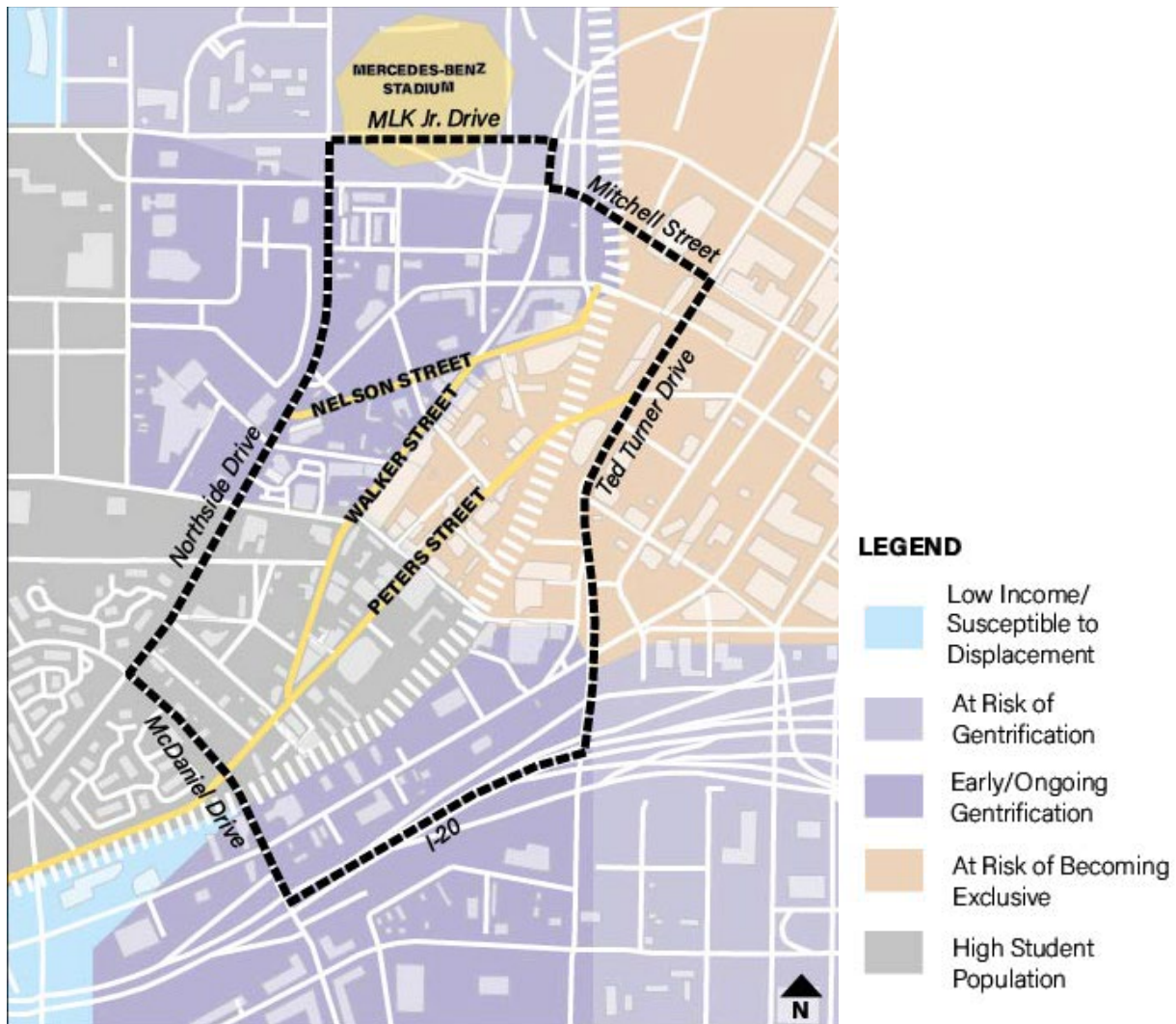


Figure 3.10: Castleberry Hill gentrification and displacement map. (The Urban Displacement Project (UDP), 2017)

Another concern for Castleberry Hill and downtown Atlanta is poverty rates. In 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that Atlanta had over 20 percent of its population living in poverty, but within Atlanta’s downtown area, this percentage was alarmingly higher. Based on U.S. Census tracts, Castleberry Hill has poverty rates ranging from 30 to 50 percent (2019), with median family incomes ranging low, between \$25,000 to \$41,000 for the neighborhood Census tracts (Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council 2020). Comparatively, Atlanta’s overall median family income is roughly \$60,000 (United States Census Bureau 2020). It is a

city goal to improve the economic status of downtown Atlanta by encouraging more mixed-income neighborhoods. In this way, the city aims to uplift communities, spread benefits and services, and mitigate displacement. Murals (or public art in general) can be one tool to support these efforts through improved streetscapes and public spaces that enhance urban living and support local businesses.

The surrounding areas of Castleberry Hill have uniquely high student populations (United States Census Bureau 2019). This is because east of the neighborhood there is Georgia State University's main campus, and west of the neighborhood there are four of Atlanta's HBCUs, including Morris Brown College and the Atlanta University Center's consortium of Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College (Figure 3.11). The HBCUs are particularly important as their history is tied to Atlanta's Black community and the preservation of the city's Black history and culture. Also, although students are only temporary residents in the area, they still have a significant impact on the neighborhood's development and identity. At least one mural in Castleberry Hill pays direct homage to these HBCUs and provides imagery to encourage the growth of Black communities through education (see *Community Roots* in Appendix B). Altogether, these demographic factors can motivate mural themes, reflecting the issues, conditions, and concerns that are most important to Castleberry Hill. Therefore, it will be important to look at these demographic trends to see how they impact community context and mural response.

Lastly, municipal zoning plays an influential role in the context of any neighborhood and how it develops, especially a neighborhood like Castleberry Hill that is so closely tied to downtown Atlanta. Castleberry Hill has five main zones: Historic and Cultural Conservation District, Mixed Use, Commercial, Industrial, and Special Public Interest (Figure 3.11). The

Historic and Cultural Conservation District Zone is derived from the area's federal and city recognition as a historic site and is the largest zone in the neighborhood, sizing at nearly 60 acres large. Notably, this zone also spans most of the center of the neighborhood, making it the focal point and the most accessible area of the neighborhood, as well as hosting the highest density of buildings. At roughly 50 acres large, the second largest zone is Mixed Use, which mostly covers the northwest corner of Castleberry Hill, closest to the Mercedes-Benz Stadium; then followed by the Special Public Interest Zone at nearly 30 acres. These zones will be particularly interesting as downtown Atlanta's current development plans focus on increasing mixed use spaces and improving their special interest areas. And although Special Public Interest zones are atypical of most municipal zoning plans, this type of zone is found throughout most of downtown Atlanta, surrounding Castleberry Hill and covering the northeast edge of the neighborhood closest to the middle of downtown. The overall goal of this zone type is to encourage mixed use, create pedestrian-friendly streets, and preserve the character of these urban, but historic, areas. This zoning initiative makes these areas notable for future urban development, changing physical and social dynamics, and increased emphasis in public and shared spaces, which could encourage more public art.

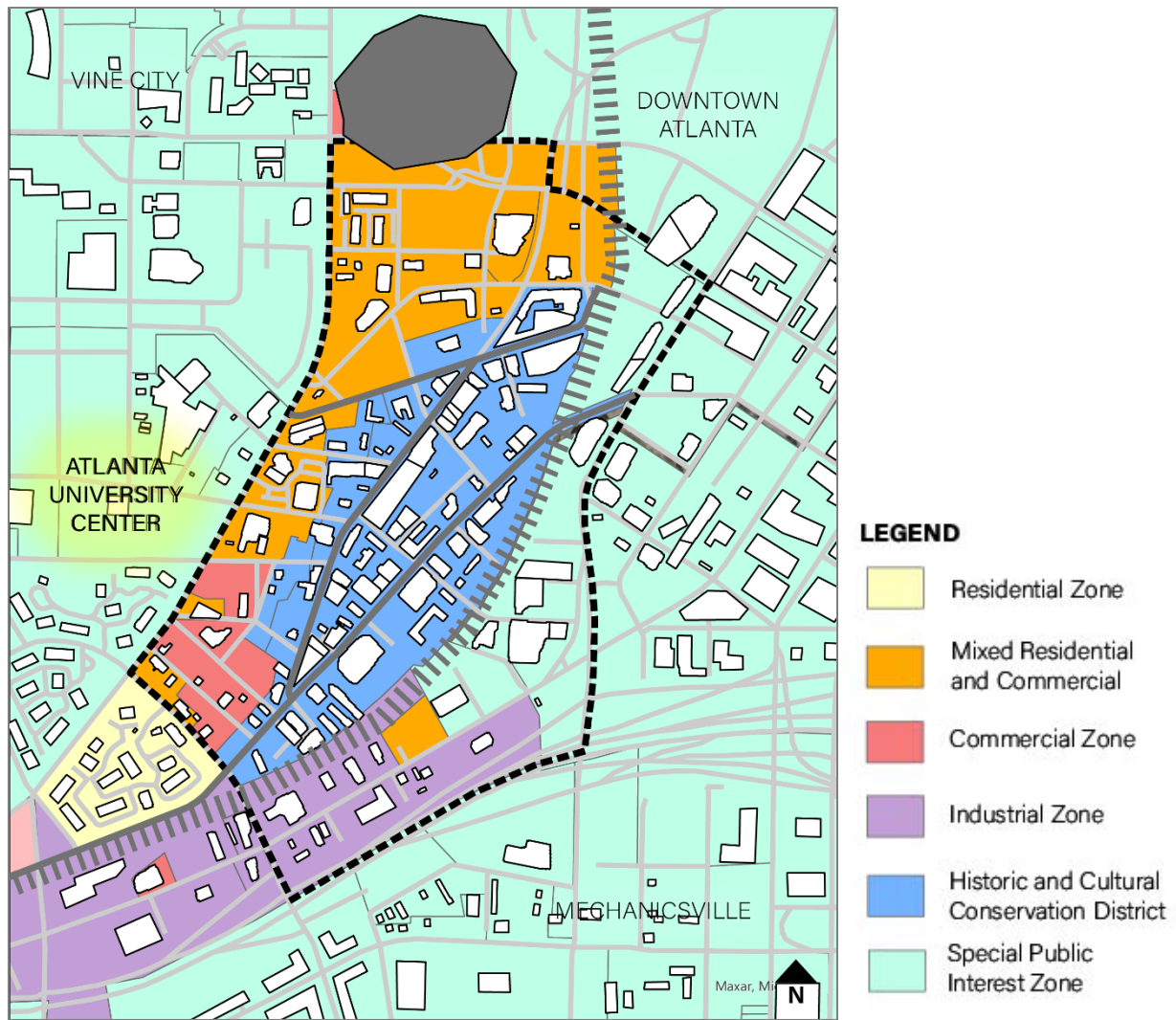


Figure 3.11: Castleberry Hill municipal zoning map. The highlighted Atlanta University Center hosts the city's consortium of four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)—Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College. (Zoning from City of Atlanta; Map by author)

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Castleberry Hill Mural Data Collection

For this study, data collection was focused on information on Castleberry Hill's mural art, neighborhood layout and spatial attributes, and community socio-economic context. This data collection was mostly confined within the Castleberry Hill official boundary lines (Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association 2006) (Figure 4.1):

- Ted Turner Drive at I-20,
- along I-20 to McDaniel Street,
- North on McDaniel Street to Northside Drive,
- along Northside Drive to MLK Jr. Drive,
- East on MLK Jr. Drive to Centennial Olympic Park Drive,
- South from Centennial Olympic Park Drive to Mitchell Street,
- East on Mitchell Street to Ted Turner Drive, and
- South on Ted Turner Drive to I-20.



Figure 4.1: Streets that define Castleberry Hill's neighborhood border (by author)

Regarding the neighborhood murals, they were first investigated using the website, Atlanta Street Art Map (ASAM), which has maps showing most of Atlanta and where the city's murals are located. The "Castleberry Hill & Southwest Downtown" map is conveniently homed in on the neighborhood, providing the first major review of the murals in the neighborhood. This map provided mural locations using Google Map pinpoints and proposed a self-directed walking tour route of the murals, which would lead followers throughout the Castleberry Hill neighborhood and eventually into downtown Atlanta's commercialized Five Points. Under the visual map, a list of the murals was provided, and each mural had an image; a link to its Google Maps address; the artist's name (if known); and sometimes a link to the artist's website, Instagram, or a note on the mural (e.g., "on a roll-up door"). If murals names were not given, which many of the murals were nameless, then the author gave names to the murals based on the mural's prominent imagery or text within the mural to help keep track of and refer to specific murals in Castleberry Hill.

After collecting all the murals from this ASAM map within the Castleberry Hill neighborhood boundaries, Google Street View was then used to verify mural status and location, while also noting initial observations of its context to help plan for future site visits. Some of these initial observations were what types of buildings and businesses were around, did these places seem accessible, and how far apart were the murals from each other.

Although the ASAM map provided a route to visit Castleberry Hill's murals, not all the neighborhood murals were connected using this route. Therefore, the ASAM route was modified to reach all the murals in the first site visit to Castleberry Hill. The first visit was done to confirm all the ASAM mapped murals, make in-person observations of the murals and the sites, and take photographs of the murals and their surrounding conditions. This first visit was done on

Saturday, October 16, 2021, and was relatively successful as most of the neighborhood's murals were located and all intended data was collected. However, some ASAM listed murals were inaccessible and some other murals that were discovered on this visit were not included in the ASAM list. Therefore, subsequent visits were conducted to try to find other ways to access the inaccessible murals and to document the newly founded murals. A total of two subsequent site visits were done on Sunday, December 12, 2021, and Saturday, March 12, 2022.

The inaccessible murals were mostly located within fenced-in private parking lots mostly shared by some residents and small businesses. For instance, on one visit it was possible to walk into the parking lot when the car gate to the *Growing Community* mural was left open, but when trying to leave, there were no walking exits and a resident had to use a remote to open the car gate for exiting. On another visit, a car gate to the parking lot holding four murals was discovered to be open only during a restaurant's business hours, and a parking attendant was guarding the entrance and collecting parking fees. Therefore, for the few murals that were physically and visibly inaccessible, ASAM website information on the murals was mostly relied upon. For newly discovered murals, they were added to the study if they were considered large paintings on external surfaces of a building or permanent structure, were not simply advertising a business (i.e., painting of a business name or logo), and did not appear to be graffiti or taggings in quality or style, but their visuals and themes seemingly connected them to their surface and warranted permission by local stakeholders. Photographs were taken, locations were noted, and mural names were given to these discovered murals by the author. In the end, there were a total of forty-three murals identified in Castleberry Hill during this study. Notably some murals were even painted or removed during the time frame of this study.

These murals are mapped in Figure 4.2 and their names listed in Table 4.1 (images of all forty-three murals can be found in Appendix B). As seen in the map, some murals are not physically within the neighborhood border, but these murals were still included in the study as they are located directly on the streets that define the official neighborhood boundaries and are placed facing inwards towards Castleberry Hill.

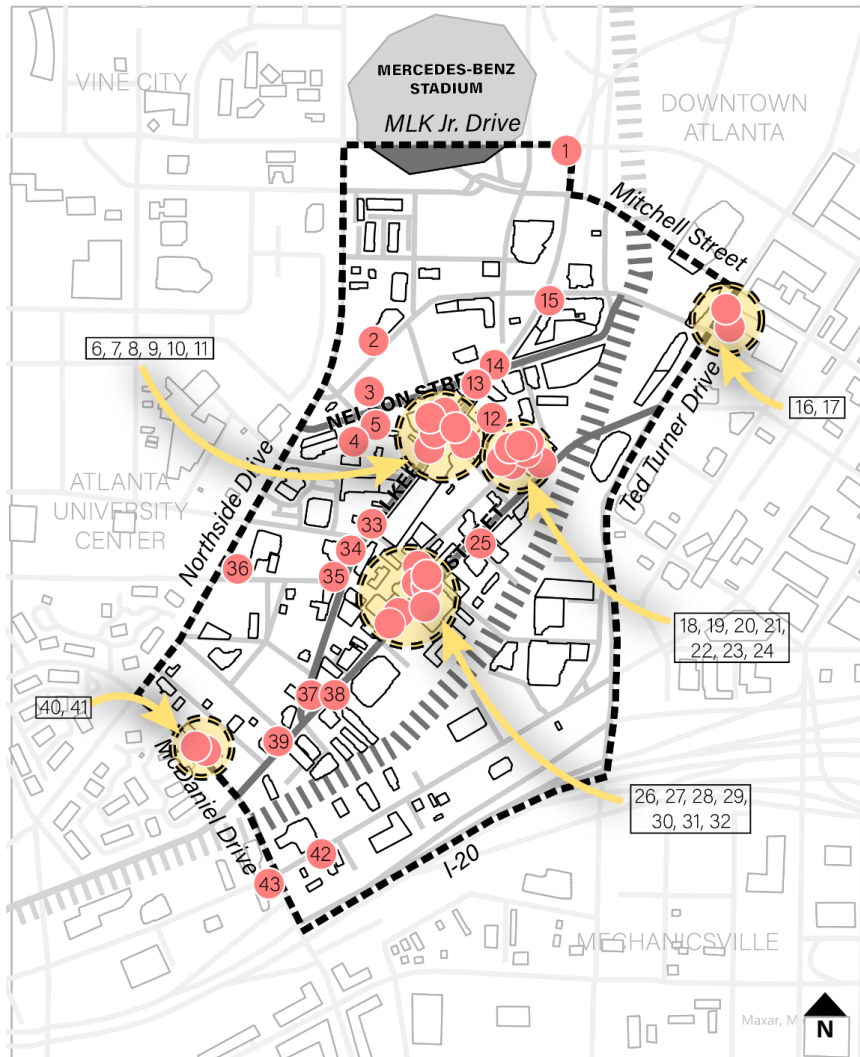


Figure 4.2: Castleberry Hill's mural locations. Mural names can be found on the next page with associated number (#) (by author)

Table 4.1: Mural names. Numbers (#) help identify the mural locations in Figure 4.2 (by author)

#	MURAL NAMES
1	<i>Utility Box 1 - Pink Flowers</i>
2	<i>MLK Vote Again</i>
3	<i>Welcome to Castleberry Hill</i>
4	<i>Community Roots</i>
5	<i>Kobe Bryant Tribute</i>
6	<i>Atlanta Strong</i>
7	<i>Matador</i>
8	<i>UNITED - Josef Martinez</i>
9	<i>Brad Guzan</i>
10	<i>158 Train</i>
11	<i>Orange Flower</i>
12	<i>Pipes</i>
13	<i>Trolley</i>
14	<i>Utility Box 3 -African Women</i>
15	<i>Utility Box 2 - Abstract Saxophone Player</i>
16	<i>Kings Become Legends</i>
17	<i>Beloved Community</i>
18	<i>Growing Community</i>
19	<i>Braves and Koi Fish</i>
20	<i>Castleberry Market</i>
21	<i>Hear No, Say No, See No (American Flag Wrap)</i>
22	<i>Atlanta Sports</i>
23	<i>Fox and Lanterns</i>
24	<i>Old Lady Gang</i>
25	<i>Sea Turtle</i>
26	<i>Black Woman with Flowers</i>
27	<i>Noodles</i>
28	<i>Black Woman with Laser Eyes</i>
29	<i>Utility Box 4 - It's Our Time To Rise Again</i>
30	<i>Peters Street Train with Map of Castleberry Hill</i>
31	<i>Everybody Love Everybody</i>
32	<i>Berries</i>
33	<i>When They Go Low, We Go High</i>
34	<i>Comedy Hype</i>
35	<i>Tiger & Panda</i>
36	<i>Jamaican Diaspora</i>
37	<i>God is Love</i>
38	<i>Utility Box 5 - Cephalopod</i>
39	<i>Hey Brown Girl, You're Beautiful</i>
40	<i>Dogs</i>
41	<i>Mr. George</i>
42	<i>Kids Save Dogs, Dogs Save Kids</i>
43	<i>Culture Makes Us Unique and Love Brings Us Together</i>

Reviewing Castleberry Hill's Neighborhood Layout and Context

Placing the murals in context of the neighborhood helped form this study's initial response to the first research question: How mural visual content and spatial conditions reflect neighborhood and community context, identity, and values? Information on neighborhood layout was mostly collected through maps and reports from sources like Georgia Department of Transportation, ArcGIS databases on Atlanta, and the Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association. Relevant available data that was used to compare to mural content and development included zoning, historical development, and current neighborhood development.

Google Maps and Google Street View was also referred to see the proximity of murals to each other and to landmarks, to see the purpose of the structure which murals were attached to, and to provide context to the neighborhood. Moreover, site visits helped confirm Google Map observations and allowed for in-person observations of street and structure usage and activity. Black-owned businesses in the neighborhood were identified by the author searching Google for information on business owners or business status among Black-owned business listings.

Google Street View was also used to estimate the time frame in which murals were painted by comparing month/year of when a mural surface was last seen blank to when the mural first appeared. If the time frame spanned several years or was unclear due to lack of Google Street View imagery, then more research was conducted on the mural's history (e.g., searching the artist, the initiative, etc.) to try to find a more exact date. If no other information was available to narrow the time frame, then a time frame midpoint was used. This process helped created a timeline of the mural installments in Castleberry Hill, showing how the mural movement developed and spread in the neighborhood over the years. The mural timeline could also be compared to mural initiatives in Atlanta to see how they were related.

Mural Content Analysis

A mural visual content analysis was done after all the Castleberry Hill murals were identified and located. The first content analysis was to retrieve descriptive information of each mural, like taking a written inventory of the visual content, which included:

- Writing a list of what the mural showed (e.g., diverse people, a Black girl, animals, the Atlanta skyline, etc.)
- Noting the mural color palette (e.g., bright and colorful, warm tones, monochromatic)
- Noting whether there was text and what did the text say. Text could be considered neutral (e.g., the name of the neighborhood or a sports team) or expressive (e.g., sharing a positive message or trying to evoke an emotional response)

Then, a second content analysis was done to interpret the murals' function. This analysis was first broader interpretations by the author to simply write out perceived messages from each mural's visual content. Afterwards, these messages were reviewed to see if there were overarching motivations among the murals and how these motivations fit in with the space and placemaking.

Mural Spatial Analysis

For the spatial analysis of Castleberry Hill's murals, observations were made using both Google Street View and in-person site visits. The initial observations of the murals in Castleberry Hill were done in-person, with notes taken describing the general conditions of the space. This process resulted in a broad inventory of spatial characteristics that could help determine what could be looked at across murals in Castleberry Hill.

From these observations, some of the most prominent spatial attributes were noted for each mural and followed with further analysis by the author. In the end, the spatial attributes that appeared to affect the majority of the murals and could be studied across murals in Castleberry Hill included:

- Mural location in terms of the layout of the neighborhood and proximity to other murals
- Street status and traffic potential, meaning if the street seemed engaging and if it seemed like many people or cars would pass by the mural
- Mural spatial qualities, including vegetation, scale and placement, and spatial engagement/maintenance/connection
- Mural visual and physical access

Multiple in-person site visits were important to verify the actual conditions of the spaces and to experience those conditions to make evaluations. Google Street View was sometimes used to help review the mural spaces remotely between site visits. However, in-person site visits were always taken after recognizing gaps in notetaking or to investigate spatial analysis issues. Some of the spatial issues included the appearance of new murals, the removal of existing murals, and whether conditions were relatively consistent over time, which over the short study period they mainly remained the same. Also, the lack of immediate access to some murals prompted multiple site visits to explore whether there were ways to enter the mural space, and in most cases, this required the permission of a local resident or parking attendant to allow entry.

Information from the first two spatial attributes, mural locations, and street status/traffic potential, could easily be mapped and compared to information derived from the neighborhood context overview and the content analysis. Mural location in terms of neighborhood layout was

an attribute noted from the observation that Castleberry Hill had three areas of spatial character – a central area with more building density, mixed use, and pedestrian infrastructure that made it seem more cohesive and socially active; a midground area with some of these traits, but less engaging for street activity and connectivity; and an edge area that lacked a lot of these features and felt relatively more disconnected from the neighborhood. Street status and traffic potential were also observed attributes that came with later verification from Georgia Department of Transportation traffic data (2022) and Strava pedestrian heatmaps (2022). Street status for Castleberry Hill was separated into engaged street (i.e., one that encourages street social activity) and through street (i.e., one that prioritizes motorists), while some murals could also be “off an engaged street” (i.e., a side street) or completely not on a public street. The author made maps of these attributes using ArcGIS Pro and Adobe Illustrator and placed mural location points on these maps. Mural location points were also color-coded based on either representational function or current status.

Furthermore, several other maps were made using ArcGIS Pro and Adobe Illustrator to analyze spatial relationships, mural content, or mural current status. Therefore, all the following comparisons were mapped:

- Mural locations and locations of neighborhood landmarks
- Mural locations and Black-owned business locations
- Mural locations and zoning
- Mural locations and types of content representation
- Mural locations and neighborhood layout
- Mural locations and street status

These comparisons were chosen after reviewing the collected information thus far and determining which information could be mapped and which information could show interesting relations to mural locations. These maps showed how Castleberry Hill's murals developed in their context, integrated with their surroundings, or disconnected from their spaces. This analysis also allowed for an elaboration of this study's first research question, and addressed this study's second question: How mural visual content and spatial conditions relate to each other to reaffirm or redefine neighborhood and community context?

After listing noteworthy mural spatial qualities, then trying to map this information, the author realized that the mural's spatial qualities were unique to each mural, to their context, and to their function. At this level of observational review, it became difficult to find common relationships of the murals to their spatial qualities, as there were many individual variables to consider that influenced the qualities of the space (e.g., was the space like this before the mural was here, did the mural cause a change in how people treat the space, can the qualities of the space even be changed or is the mural the best attempt at that, are the spatial qualities more of a reflection of other factors besides the mural, etc.). Also, it was important to remember that murals are placed in all types of spaces based on what surfaces/properties are available for muralists and what the mural is intended to do for the space. What is available for a mural installation might not always be desirable space; or the intent of the murals itself could be to occupy an undesirable space and make it a little more desirable.

With this complexity and nuance behind spatial quality, which complicates the narrowing of categories, broader comparisons of mural content, context, and spatial qualities were reviewed and discussed. Discussion focused on how spatial-thematic relationships can positively or negatively affect mural viewing and experience. Specific murals in Castleberry Hill were

referenced to explain these effects and provide visual examples. This discussion identified spatial features to consider and respond to, as well as offered suggestions to utilize challenges in spatial conditions as opportunities for mural design.

Regarding access of murals, this seemed to be a significant spatial condition to address, as a core benefit and principle of muralism as an art form is its accessibility to the public. As murals are a visual art form, visual access to view them was an obvious consideration. Viewing murals could also be affected in how people are able to approach these murals and whether there were physical obstacles or limitations in getting a good view of the murals; therefore, physical access was also accounted for.

Accessibility can be defined and perceived in so many ways, to an abled-body person versus a disabled person; to a community member versus a first-time visitor; to pedestrian versus a motorist. Also, similar to what was discussed for spatial quality, murals can be placed in spaces that are less accessible more so based on what surfaces are available or on the mural's intent (i.e., prioritizes other aesthetic and social benefits over accessibility). Therefore, with this complexity, accessibility was more so observed, described, and discussed in terms of how it might benefit or harm mural viewing and experience, while examples of Castleberry Hill murals were provided. This process was similar to how spatial quality was addressed, and, in the end, these observations and discussions led to findings for this study's third research question: 3) How can these observations inform mural design and placement for future planning in other neighborhoods and communities?

With how the research developed to respond to the complexity of mural observations in Castleberry Hill and the lack of precedent studies looking at the same variables affecting mural experience, this study's approach emphasized descriptive and observational analysis. In this way,

the results generated more practical knowledge of what should be considered when working through mural content, spatial surroundings, and community context, plus provided factors and relationships that could be explored further in future studies. Defining and creating a better understanding of the factors that affect murals and the potential relationships between them also helped identify reasons why murals can serve as placemaking tools, while also highlighting the most effective factors that contribute to mural success in neighborhood placemaking.

Limitations

The scope of this study is limited to an observational, descriptive analysis approach conducted by the author. As stated previously in the introduction, community input and consideration can be very important to mural making as murals are often a collaborative effort that has social and cultural impacts. Therefore, it would have been desirable to include interviews and/or surveys of community members in this methodology to provide more direct insight into Castleberry Hill's mural development. Castleberry Hill community members could have shared their perspective and knowledge on mural content, spatial conditions, and context, which would have more accurately informed this study's findings. This could have also helped deal with the limitation that this study is only from the evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of one person – the author. However, there was a time restraint in this study, as interviews require a lot of planning, including developing questions, outreach to as many community members as possible to have diverse input, organizing interview times, reviewing this data, and conducting any follow-ups. From initial research of the neighborhood murals themselves and their context, it was determined that there was a significant amount of information that could come from observations alone and that could be reviewed by one person to allow this study to proceed.

Another limitation to note is that this study did not review the process of how murals were made in Castleberry Hill, which can be important to how a mural and its space are perceived. For instance, if a mural is designed and painted directly by community members, then this process already adds a layer of value to the mural and strengthens its connection to its context and the local residents. In comparison, a mural that has limited community participation (i.e., is only a process between property owner, muralist, and city permitter) might be perceived as less tied to the neighborhood, despite its content, because there was a lack of active collaboration and contribution from local stakeholders. Again, this limitation came with time and resource constraints, as the process to investigate all forty-three murals to review how they each were designed and installed would have been intensive and could constitute a research project on its own. However, it is noted that this information would have been beneficial to this study's findings and could be the basis of future research. In Chapter 6, more ideas of future research are discussed.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS & DISCUSSION: ANALYZING CASTLEBERRY HILL'S MURALS IN CONTEXT, CONTENT, AND SPACE

Placing the Murals in Context

One main aim of this study is to provide supporting information as to how mural visual content and spatial conditions reflect the neighborhood and community context, identity, and values. Therefore, while moving forward into the results of the study, it is also important to refer to previous chapters as a reminder of what information relates most to this study's findings. First, Chapter 3 introduced some existing neighborhood landmarks which show interesting relations to mural locations. For instance, one landmark is Castleberry Hill's federally and municipally designated historic area. These forty acres are within the fifty-acre Historic and Cultural Conservation District Zone, which hosts thirty-three of the neighborhood's forty-three murals (Figure 5.1). This is a significant number of murals, as it accounts for over three-quarters of the currently existing murals in Castleberry Hill.

The neighborhood's historic streets – Peters Street, Walker Street, and Nelson Street – are all notable landmarks within the historic zoning; however, their development in the neighborhood has differed. Nelson Street, which had the neighborhood's first bridge to cross the railroad line, no longer has this connection to the eastern side of the neighborhood; instead, Peters Street now has this connecting bridge. Moreover, both the neighborhood portions of Peters Street and Walker Street are completely within the historic zoning and are nearly parallel to each other (Figure 5.1). This situation for the two streets seems to have encouraged mutually

beneficial growth between them and allowed these areas to be a hub for commercial and residential development. Although Nelson Street has still seen some commercial and residential build-up, particularly on its eastern end that is zoned as historic, it is not as prevalent as Peters and Walker Street, and its mural count seemingly reflects this. Most of the neighborhood murals line Peters and Walker Street and concentrate at their roadway and pedestrian intersections, while the murals on Nelson Street are fewer and mostly located on the neighborhood's northwest edge near the Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Nelson Street's mural content and placement also seem to serve more as welcome signs and aesthetic improvements to surface parking lots, implying that their target audience are more stadium visitors or outsiders entering Castleberry Hill. Murals along Peters and Walker Streets are closer together and more diverse in content, serving more as art galleries and connecting artful streetscapes

Regarding the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, this is a third modern-day landmark, as it is a major context marker for Castleberry Hill's northern edge. It is an attraction for many visitors to the area, as well as a center for financial investment. However, as previously discussed, the type of investment is more based on commercial growth, which can lead to gentrification and/or lack of focus on residential services that threaten the existing small businesses and community in the neighborhood. In looking at the area that surrounds the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, there is a noticeable reduction in building density and a lack of murals on this edge of the neighborhood (Figure 5.1). The one mural nearest the stadium, *Utility Box 1 – Pink Flowers*, is on an on-street utility box, not a building, and is starkly isolated from other murals or even other attractions besides the stadium. Even the author could have overlooked this mural if it were not for an Instagram post made by the group that commissioned the art (Figure 5.2). Otherwise, the closest group of murals to the stadium are on Nelson Street and along the edge of the Historic and

Cultural Conservation District Zone. Thus, in regard to neighborhood character, layout, and public art development, this line of murals seemingly serves as a new north border for the existing community of Castleberry Hill (Figure 5.1).

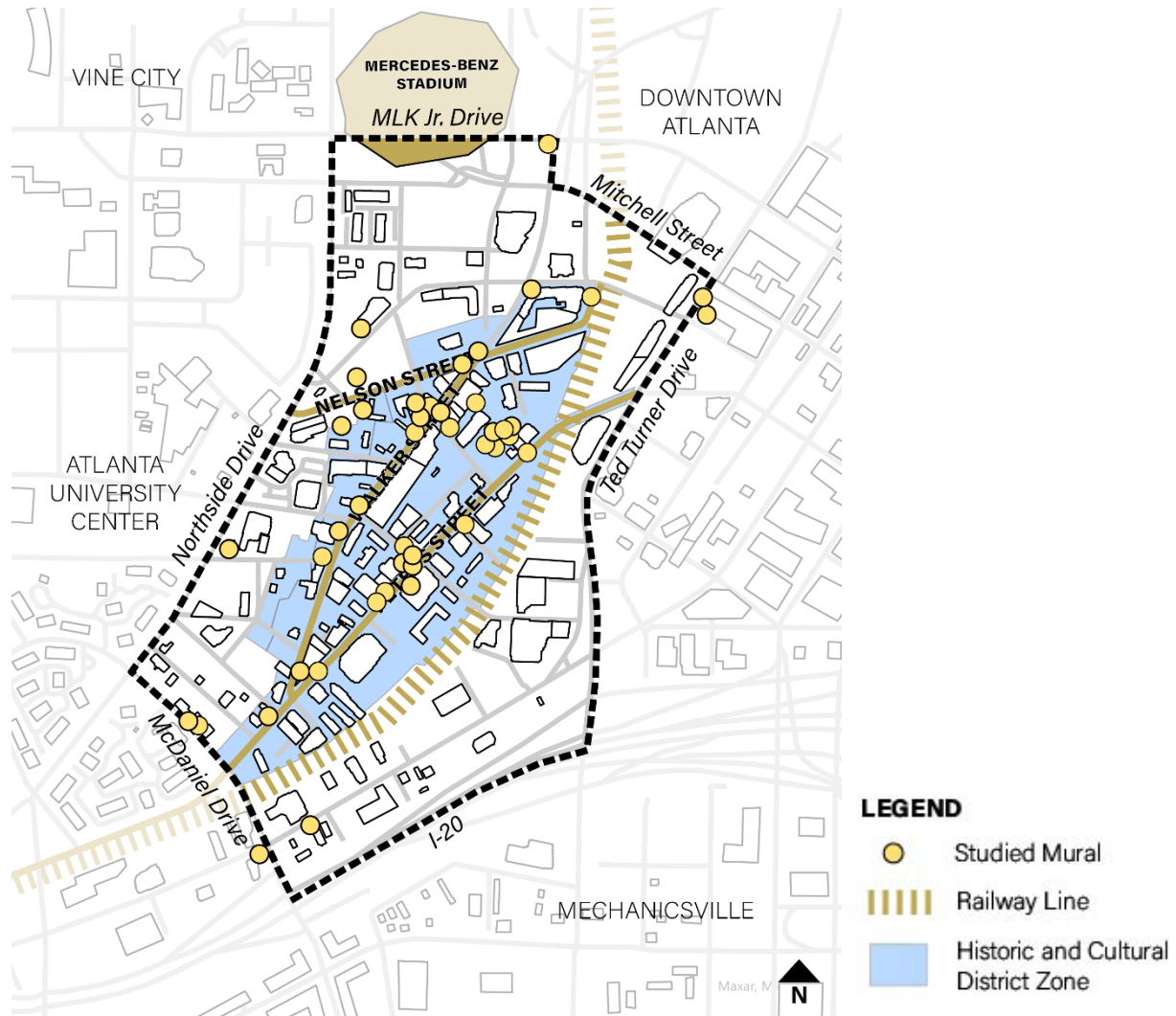


Figure 5.1: Castleberry Hill's mural locations placed in neighborhood context (by author)

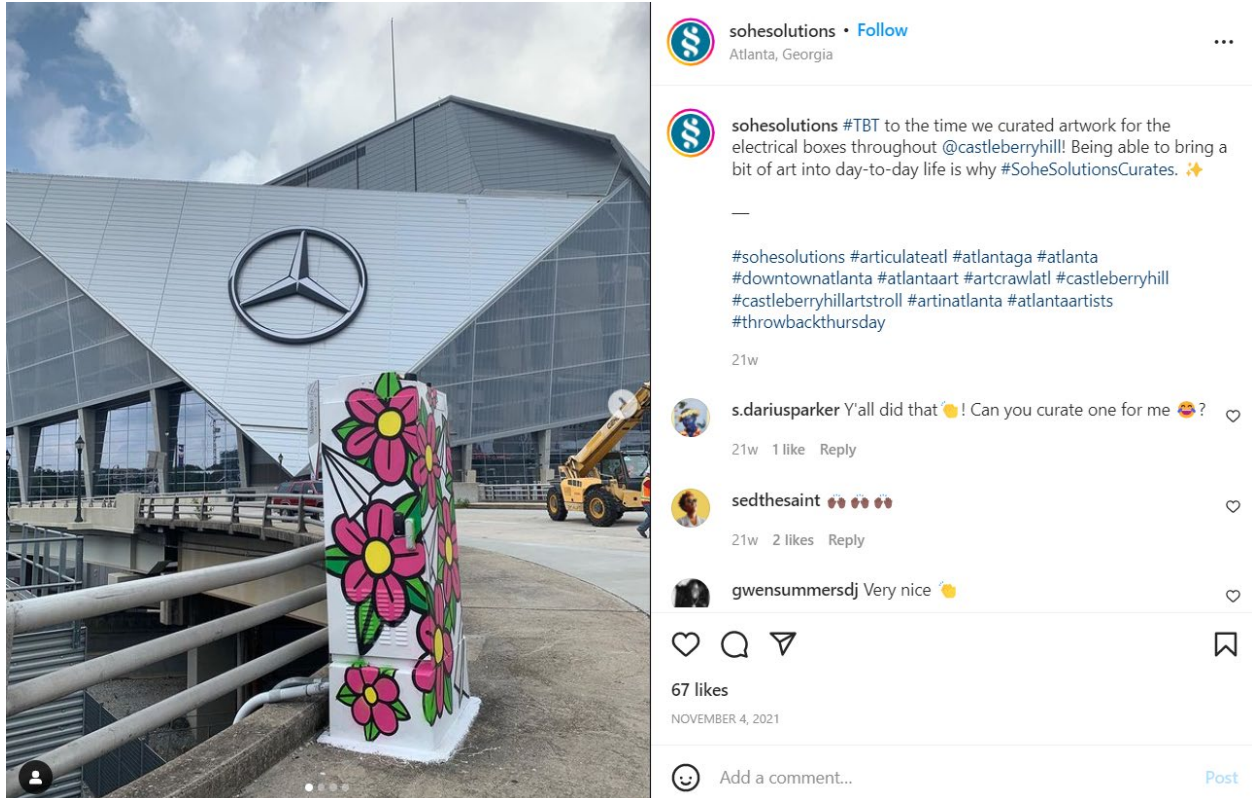


Figure 5.2: Instagram post of *Utility Box 1: Pink Flowers*. This is one of the only murals close to Mercedes-Benz Stadium and it is starkly isolated. (Sohe Solutions, 2021)

Second, as mentioned in Chapter 3 under Castleberry Hill’s Mural Trend, mural art began to appear in the neighborhood around 2010, the same time as Art on the Atlanta Beltline and Living Walls were established as supportive public art organizations and a year before ELEVATE Atlanta started hosting their public art events. Ever since the first neighborhood mural installations there has been significant growth in the number of murals in Castleberry Hill, which is shown in the timeline of mural development below (Figure 5.3). In 2015, a Living Walls mural that focused on aesthetics was replaced by a Loss Prevention mural called *Atlanta Strong*, which has direct visual references to the neighborhood’s history and Atlanta’s Black community (Figure 3.3). When looking at the timeline, ever since this replacement in 2015, the number of murals in the neighborhood has doubled nearly every year, with *Atlanta Strong* seemingly at epicenter of this expansion. This timeline also shows that as more murals were

added, some murals were also lost due to new development or replaced for newer mural content. This flux of murals even occurred during the study as two new murals were painted and two existing murals were removed in between site visits, emphasizing the ephemerality of muralism. Murals that were removed or replaced before this study's first site visit in October 2021 were not included in the study's overall count or analysis since examining their spatial conditions in relation to their content would have been limited to Google Street View and would have lacked in-person observations. However, these removed or replaced murals are marked as black points in Figure 5.3 to show how active the neighborhood's mural development has been in the last few years. The two murals removed in 2022 were included in this study as in-person observations were made before their removal.

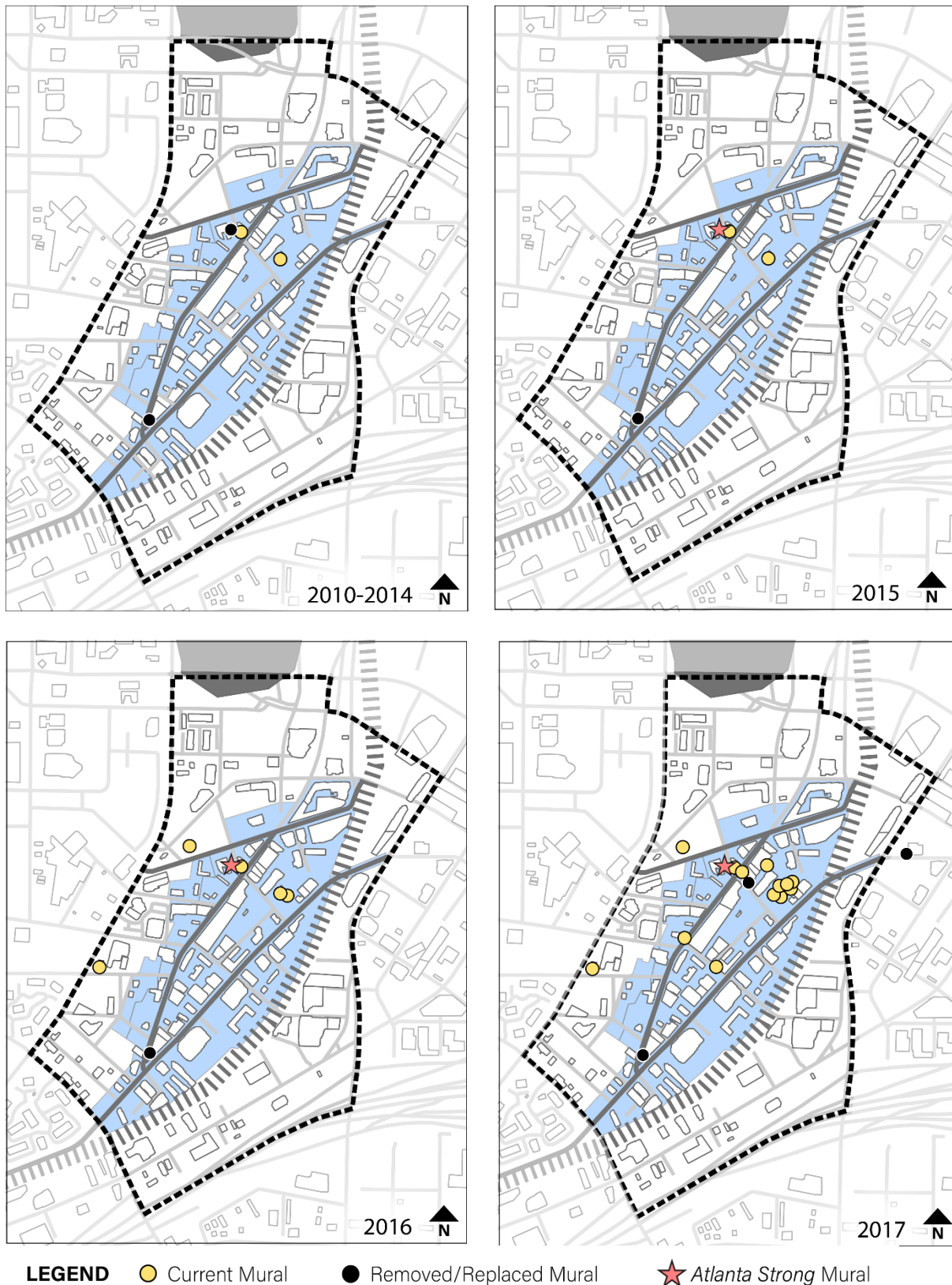


Figure 5.3: Castleberry Hill's mural development timeline (by author)

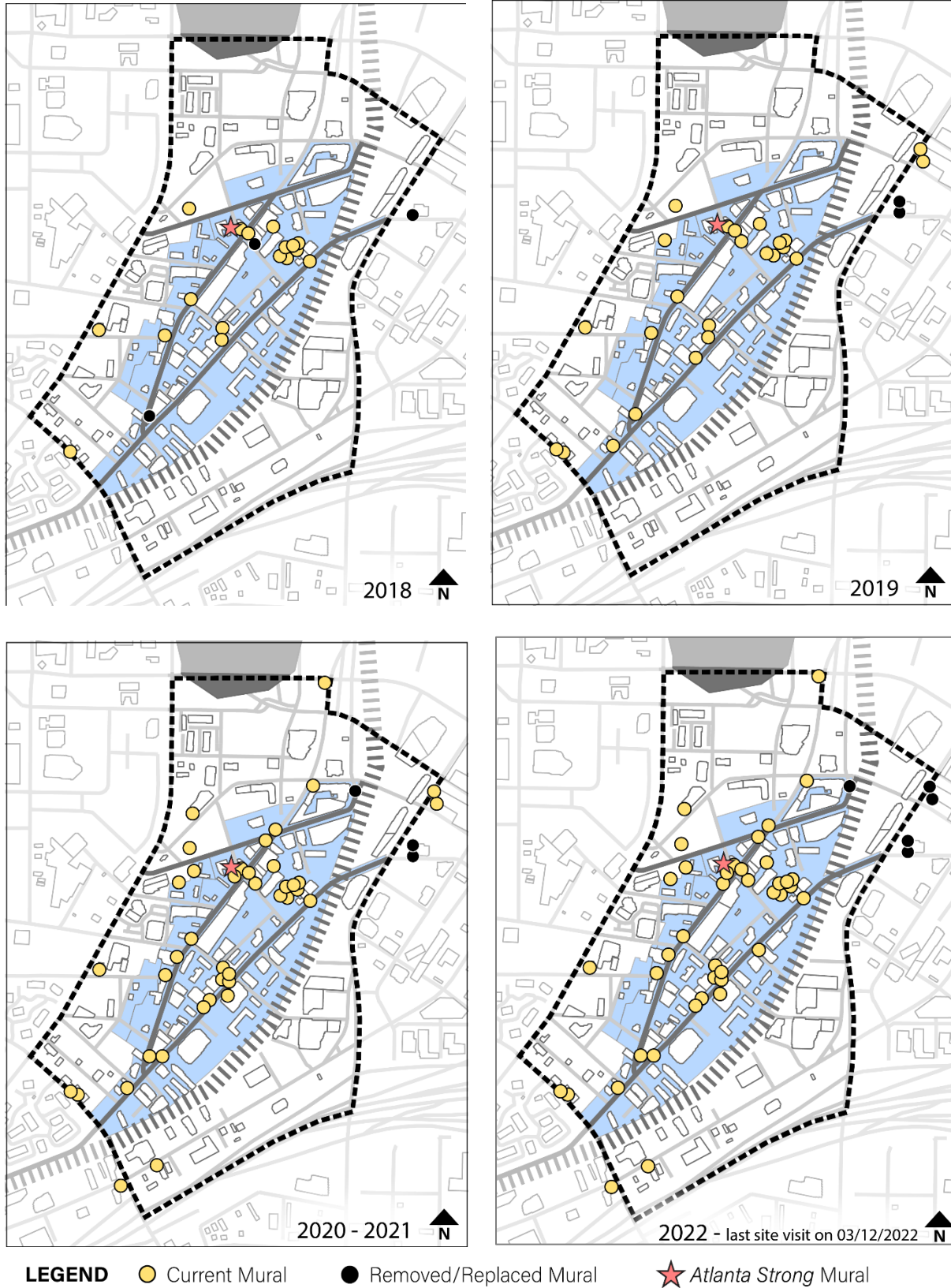


Figure 5.3 (*continued*): Castleberry Hill's mural development timeline (by author)

Lastly, to elaborate on the municipal zoning of Castleberry Hill, another finding about the Historic and Cultural Conservation District Zone is its relation to the community's Black-owned businesses. Castleberry Hill claims to have one of the highest concentrations of Black-owned businesses in the country, and although there was no comparative data to support this ranking, the neighborhood does have an impressive 59 confirmed Black-owned businesses (Appendix A). This number was tallied by the author using Google searches, business websites, and web articles listing Atlanta's Black-owned businesses to identify whether businesses were Black-owned; therefore, there may be a few businesses missing from the count. Most of these businesses are located within the historic zoning (Figure 5.4), just like how the majority of murals are located in this same area. Perhaps, this connection is more related to the higher building density within the historic zoning, but it is still worth attention as this type of zoning intends to preserve and highlight the character of urban environments, which potentially provides some protection for the local businesses and mural art within these zones. Furthermore, the ties between preservation zoning, Black-owned businesses, and muralism in Castleberry Hill could possibly be mutually beneficial, serving as a support system for existing neighborhood features and community character.

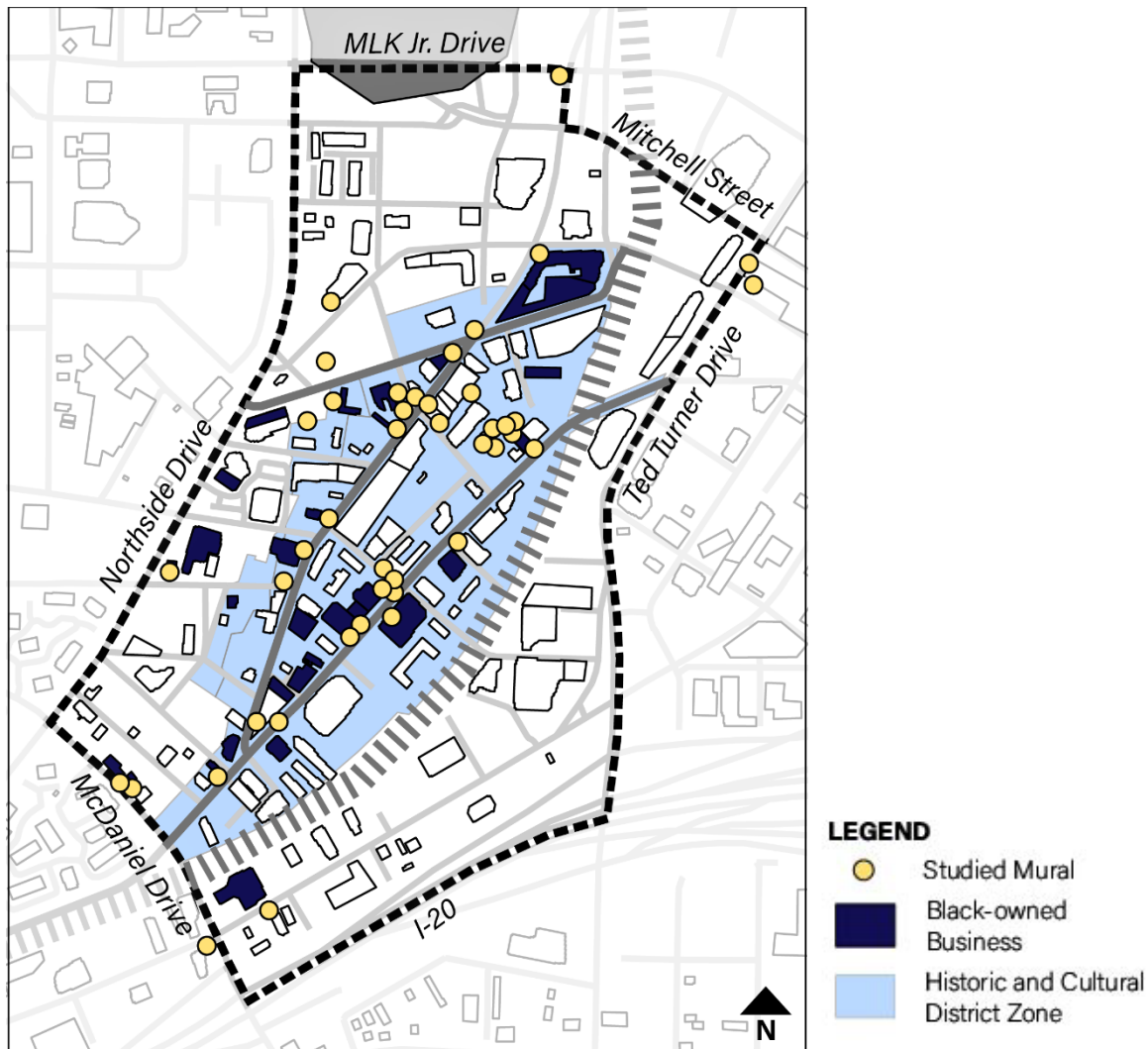


Figure 5.4: Castleberry Hill's Black-owned businesses and mural locations (by author)

As for other notable zoning types in the neighborhood, the Special Public Interest (SPI) Zone on the northeast edge of Castleberry Hill seems to host murals only for relatively short periods of time as the five murals within and bordering this zone have all been removed within a three- to five-year period (see Figure 5.5). They are also the only neighborhood murals to be lost and not replaced thus far. There are two factors that may attribute to why these murals were so short lived in this zoned corner. The first reason deals with the location of the SPI zone as it is physically separated from the majority of the neighborhood by the railway track, which can disconnect its development from the rest of Castleberry Hill. Second, SPI zones are designated

by the city for urban re-development to improve the livability of downtown Atlanta. Therefore, although murals might be a part of this initiative of new urban planning and design, the already existing murals can fall victim to this change.

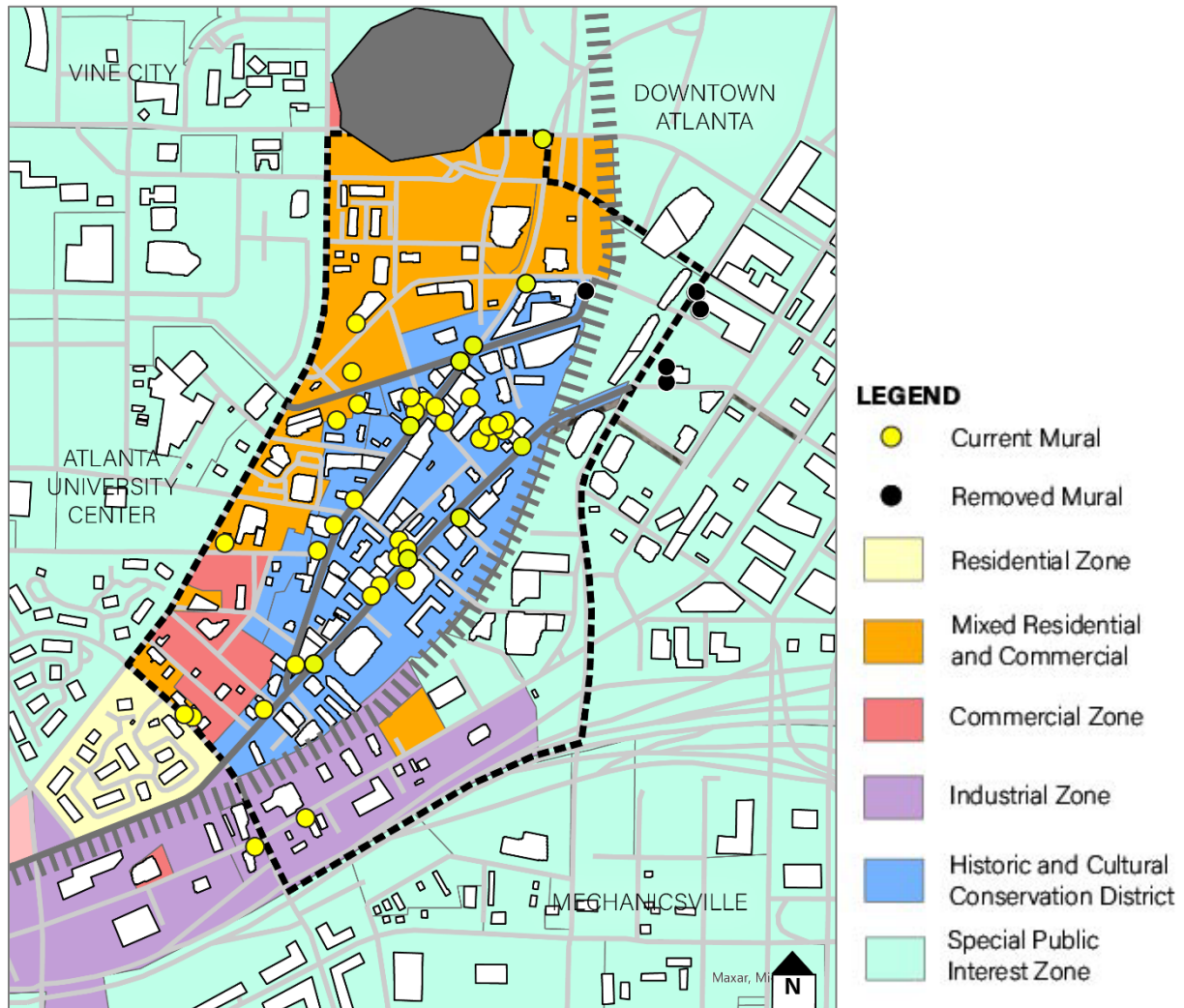


Figure 5.5: Castleberry Hill's municipal zoning map with current and removed murals (by author)

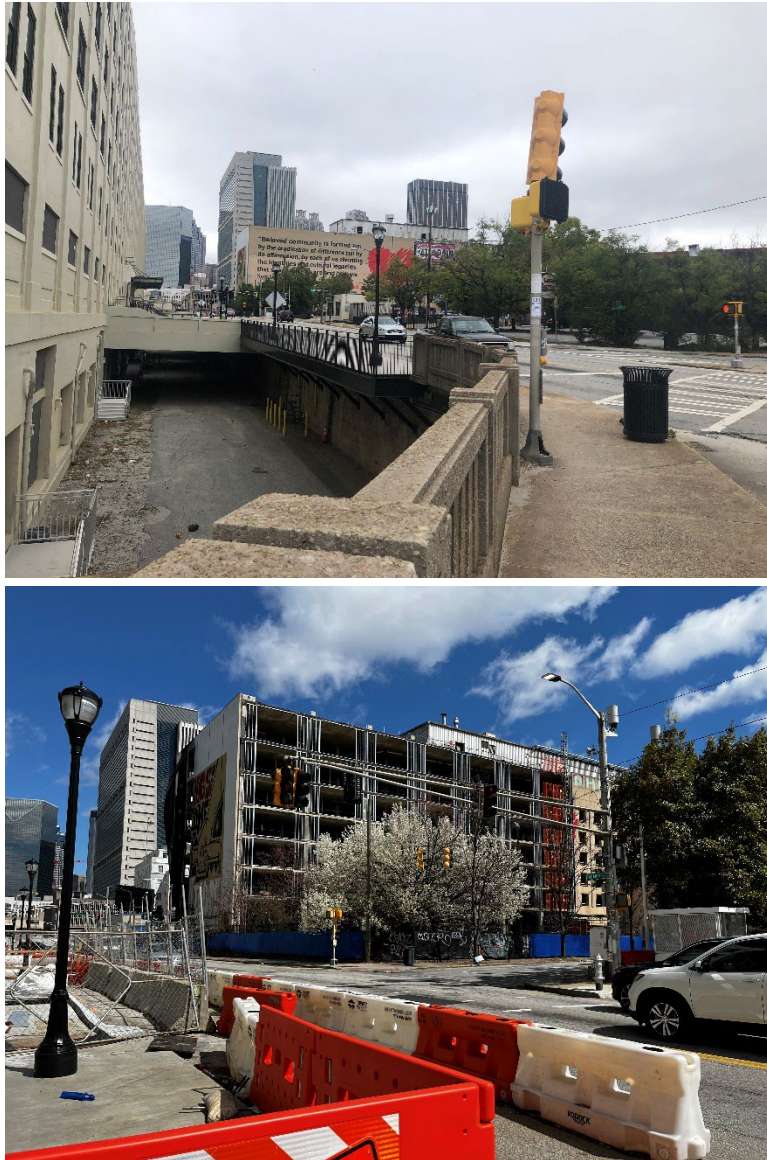


Figure 5.6: Castleberry Hill murals being removed within the Special Public Interest (SPI) Zone. Top: *Beloved Community* seen from a distance on the October 16, 2021, site visit; *Kings Become Legends* is also located on the left side of this same building, which is a vacant office building on the northeast edge of Castleberry Hill within the SPI Zone. Bottom: Removal of both building facades and their murals, seen on the March 12, 2022, site visit. The building is being renovated to become a new office/commercial center. (by author)

Findings of Mural Content Analysis

From the first analysis of the murals, which focused on simply identifying and describing what was visually shown in the murals, there were some common items and subjects in the mural content. Overall, Castleberry Hill has a wide range of mural visuals, from colorful to simplistic color palettes, realistic to cartoon styles, and complex to minimalistic depictions. There were even some murals that stylistically resembled graffiti art but were in spaces that showed they were either commissioned or appreciated (Figure 5.7), challenging the idea of graffiti as a physical blemish or societal nuisance. As a mural hotspot, Castleberry Hill can perhaps afford this liberty to explore broader and more radical forms of art.



Figure 5.7: *Tiger and Pandas* mural in Castleberry Hill, which has graffiti-style text. (by author)

At one end of this range, there were some generic content types, including city sports, likeable animals, or pretty flowers, which most people can recognize and enjoy. There were several murals with text, which could be simply identifying its context or that could be motivating in some way. In this way, text could be seen as neutrally informative or as expressive, and this expression could be widely received or more direct to certain audiences.

In trying to identify content themes unique to Castleberry Hill, one was that many of the neighborhood's murals featured people of color, which aligns with muralism's origins as an art form for non-white, minority communities. With this theme, Castleberry Hill's mural art catered particularly to its historical connections to the Black community by depicting more Black individuals than any other racial identity. In expressive forms of text, some murals also directly addressed racial and cultural diversity, perhaps reflecting the values of the neighborhood (Figure 5.8). Moreover, several murals depicted trains – another unique content type that reflects the local context and the neighborhood history with the Atlanta railroad system.



Figure 5.8: *Culture Makes Us Unique and Love Brings Us Together* mural in Castleberry Hill, which shows diverse women. (by author)

In the second analysis of mural content, overall function and intent of murals was explored to find patterns in the mural content. No matter their location, murals are used for aesthetic, representational, or inspirational purposes, and frequently a mural can serve more than

one of these purposes. Castleberry Hill's murals show these functions in ways that are both common to public muralism and unique to its context.

Aesthetic

Murals are a visual art form; they are almost always intended for aesthetic improvement. In the rare instances where they are not meant for beautification, they are then most often intended to make a statement, challenging a range of issues from what is considered art to what should be confronted in society. However, Castleberry Hill's murals all stay within the realm of socially "acceptable" aesthetics. All are within a pleasing palette, with some sharing political, social, and cultural motives or representation, but none portraying what would be considered too extreme or shocking to a wider audience. Although they are all unsurprisingly aesthetic in intent, it must be noted that there are ten Castleberry Hill murals that seemingly do not go beyond aesthetic. These murals could have underlying intent unknown to the casual viewer or an outsider to the community, but if this is the case, then with this study's content analysis and contextual research, this is still unclear and/or lost in interpretation. In any case, these types of solely aesthetic murals in Castleberry Hill have appealing, but neutral, imagery that brings vibrancy, embellishment, and visual interest to their surfaces and space. In other words, they are visually attractive, but do not attempt to do more for the Castleberry Hill community and neighborhood beyond being a form of creative expression, decoration, and beautification.

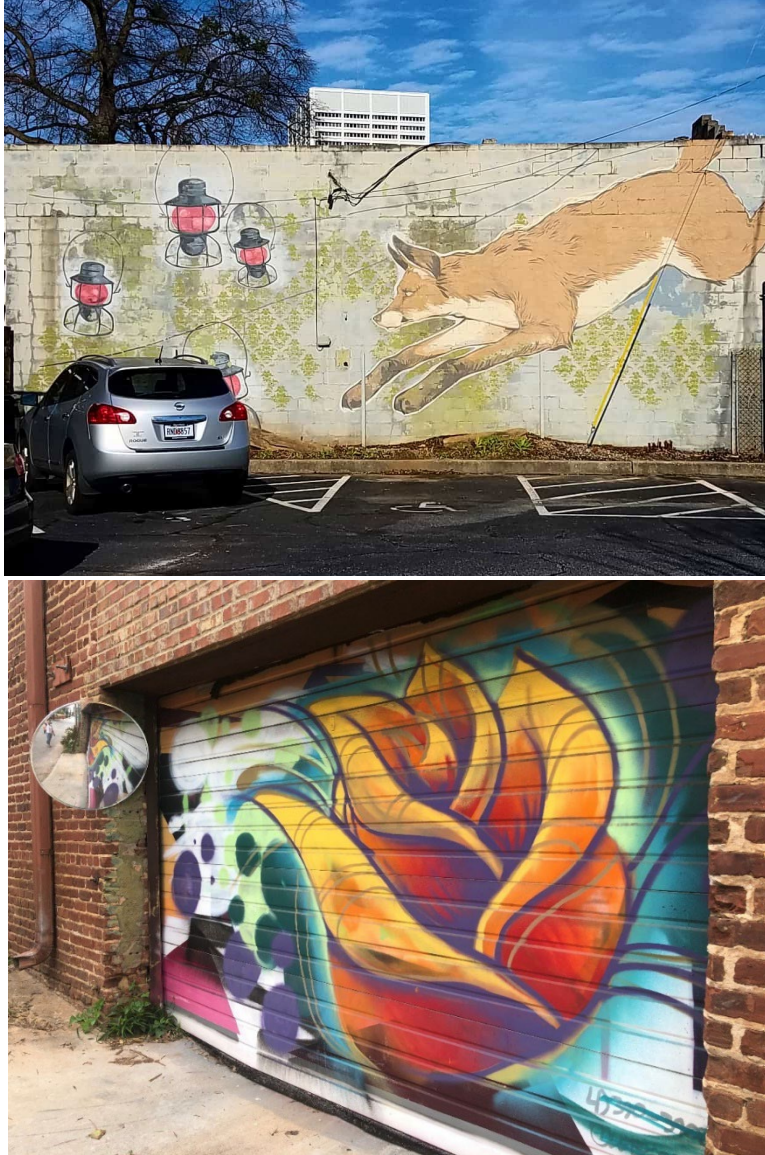


Figure 5.9: Examples of aesthetic murals in Castleberry Hill. Top: *Fox and Lanterns*. Bottom: *Orange Flower* (by author)

Community and Neighborhood Representation

Fundamentally, all murals represent something, but whether that representation can be interpreted or how it is interpreted can vary. For instance, the ten aesthetic murals of Castleberry Hill could have greater meaning and purpose to the artist, to the people who commissioned the art, or to a very specific audience, but this representation could be lost to a wider audience. On the other hand, there are types of representation that can be more direct in what they represent.

Tribute murals are one example of this, in which a real-life person who is locally, nationally, or globally recognizable is portrayed or referenced in the mural. Sometimes, a tribute mural does not need to have an image of the notable figure but could have a famous quote that is easily associated with the recognized figure (Figure 5.10).



Figure 5.10: *When They Go Low, We Go High* tribute mural to Michelle Obama. An example of a mural that has a quote from the notable figure without directly identifying them (by author)

Castleberry Hill had eleven tribute murals, which were spread throughout the neighborhood. Three of these murals included portraits of local Black business owners, and these murals were directly on the buildings of their businesses. These businesses were a barbershop, a Southern/soul food restaurant, and a storage warehouse owned by the Russell family; therefore, they are also businesses that could have strong ties to the local Black community. Only two murals in Castleberry Hill were tributes to non-Black figures, and both these murals portrayed two different Atlanta United professional soccer players. Otherwise, most tribute murals included nationally recognized Black figures, like Kobe Bryant and bell hooks, and could have connections to the neighborhood's Black community and history.



Figure 5.11: Examples of tribute murals in Castleberry Hill. Top: *Old Lady Gang* tribute mural to the restaurant owners. Bottom: *Brad Guzan* tribute mural to the Atlanta United soccer player (by author)

In this case study, there seemed to be two types of representation that were unique to Castleberry Hill and helped define and/or reinforce the identity of the neighborhood. One was representing the Black community and its influence on Castleberry Hill, and the second was representing the neighborhood itself and its history. There were twenty-six murals identified as showing representation of the Black community and/or the neighborhood.

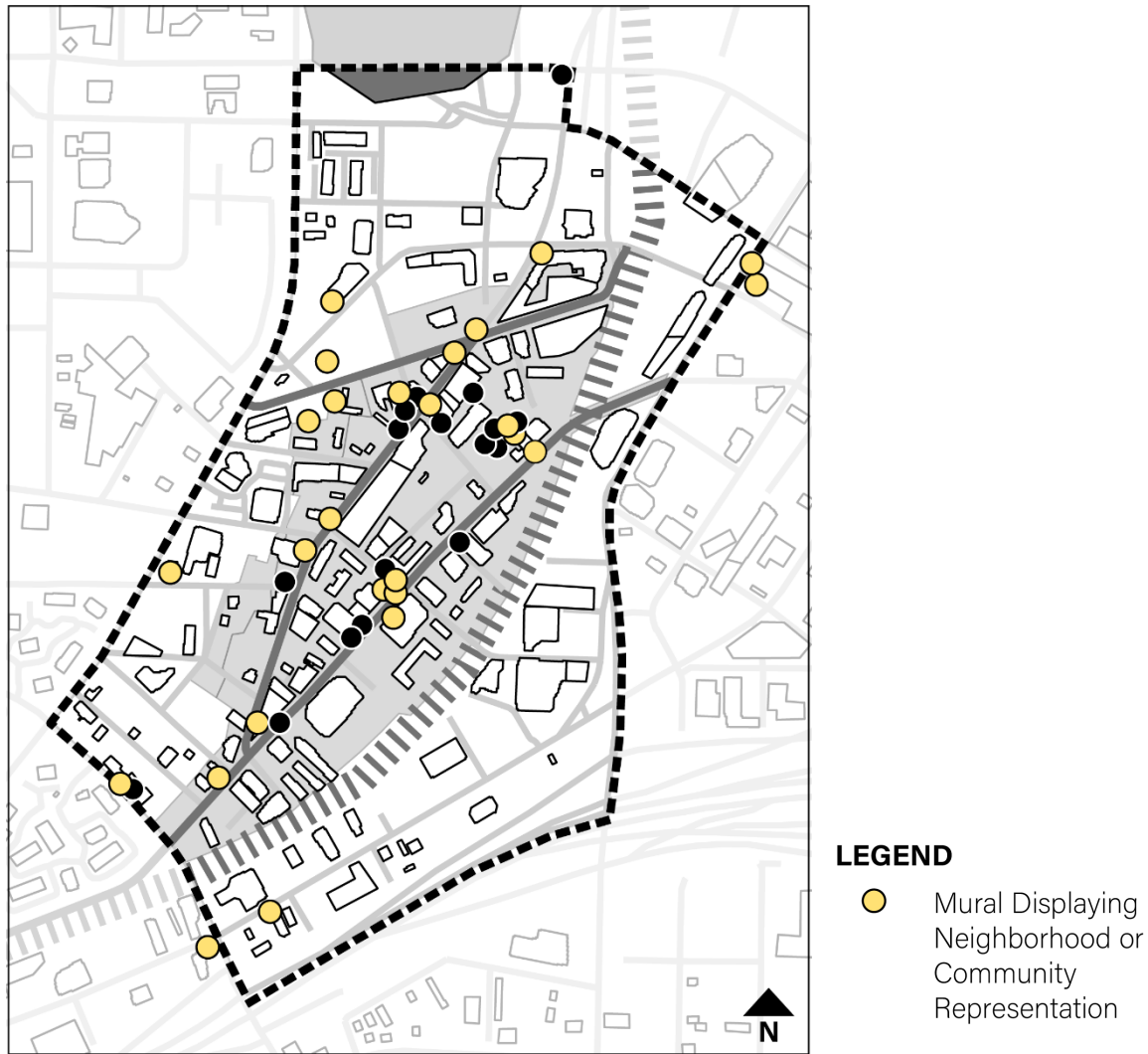


Figure 5.12. Castleberry Hill's mural locations with neighborhood and community representation. (by author)

First, there is neighborhood representation, meaning that murals showed direct imagery or text that referred to the neighborhood or its history. Examples of this include murals as simple as *Welcome to Castleberry Hill*, which simply included the name of the neighborhood, but named the viewers' context. Then, there are more complex murals like *Peters Street Train with Map of Castleberry Hill* which depicted the neighborhood's historic streets and a train engine, which ties to the railroad that helped establish the neighborhood.

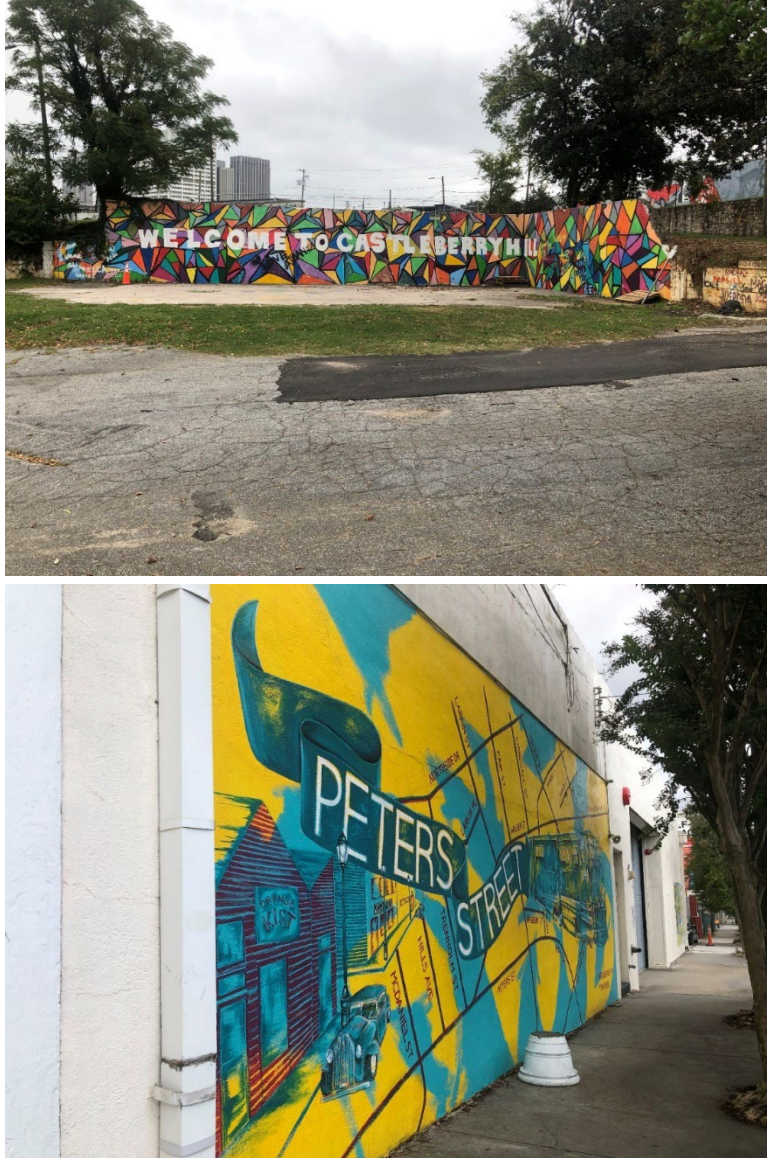


Figure 5.13: Examples of neighborhood representation murals in Castleberry Hill. Top: *Welcome to Castleberry Hill* mural that serves as a welcome sign on the northwest edge of the neighborhood. Bottom: *Peters Street with Map of Castleberry Hill* mural that also includes paintings of old businesses along Peters Street and the train. (by author)

Then there were murals intended to provide Black representation and connect with the neighborhood's Black community and history. These types of murals had what appeared to be three main approaches to Black representation: 1) through beauty and cultural appreciation, 2) through themes of empowerment, and 3) through references of role models. Beauty and cultural appreciation meant the murals highlight Black people's physical and cultural beauty, often

showing Black hairstyles, variations of African clothing, and inspiring messages of self-confidence and pride. Mural themes of empowerment showed Black people with agency to do great things, whether this is uplifting oneself, providing opportunities for others to grow, or strengthening the Black community through collective action. Showcasing Black role models meant referencing locally or nationally recognized Black figures, either in imagery or in text, which could celebrate their accomplishments, honor their legacy, and/or inspire the local Black community. Some of the neighborhood murals had more than one type of Black representation (Table 5.1). Examples of these types of Black representation are provided below (Figure 5.14).

Table 5.1: Castleberry Hill ‘s murals with Black representation and their type of Black representation. (by author)

#	MURAL NAMES	TYPE OF BLACK REPRESENTATION		
		<i>Beauty/Culture</i>	<i>Empowerment</i>	<i>Role Model</i>
2	<i>MLK Vote Again</i>			
4	<i>Community Roots</i>			
5	<i>Kobe Bryant Tribute</i>			
6	<i>Atlanta Strong</i>			
14	<i>Utility Box 3 -African Women</i>			
15	<i>Utility Box 2 - Abstract Saxophone Player</i>			
17	<i>Beloved Community</i>			
18	<i>Growing Community</i>			
24	<i>Old Lady Gang</i>			
25	<i>Black Woman with Flowers</i>			
27	<i>Black Woman with Laser Eyes</i>			
28	<i>Utility Box 4 - It's Our Time To Rise Again</i>			
32	<i>When They Go Low, We Go High</i>			
33	<i>Comedy Hype</i>			
35	<i>Jamaican Diaspora</i>			
36	<i>God is Love</i>			
38	<i>Hey Brown Girl, You're Beautiful</i>			
40	<i>Mr. George</i>			
41	<i>Kids Save Dogs, Dogs Save Kids</i>			
42	<i>Culture Makes Us Unique and Love Brings Us Together</i>			



Figure 5.14: Examples of types of Black representation in Castleberry Hill murals. Top: *Hey Brown Girl You're Beautiful* and *Jamaican Diaspora* show beauty and cultural appreciation. Middle: *Black Woman with Laser Eyes* and *Community Roots* show empowerment. Bottom: *Mr. George* and *Comedy Hype* show role models. Although these were the main perceived functions of the murals, all of them can be interpreted to have overlapping types of Black representation (by author)

Out of the twenty-six murals that conveyed community and/or neighborhood representation, twenty had Black representation, ten had neighborhood representation, and, among these, four had both. Black representation was split almost evenly with eleven under beauty and cultural appreciation, ten under empowerment, and seven under role models, and many of these overlapped. Overall, this showed that Castleberry Hill's mural development had a strong focus on representing its context and community and supporting its neighborhood through its muralism. Over half of the neighborhood's mural art was tied to the neighborhood or the Black community in some way; thus, serving beyond aesthetics or generalized intent and making connections directly to Castleberry Hill.

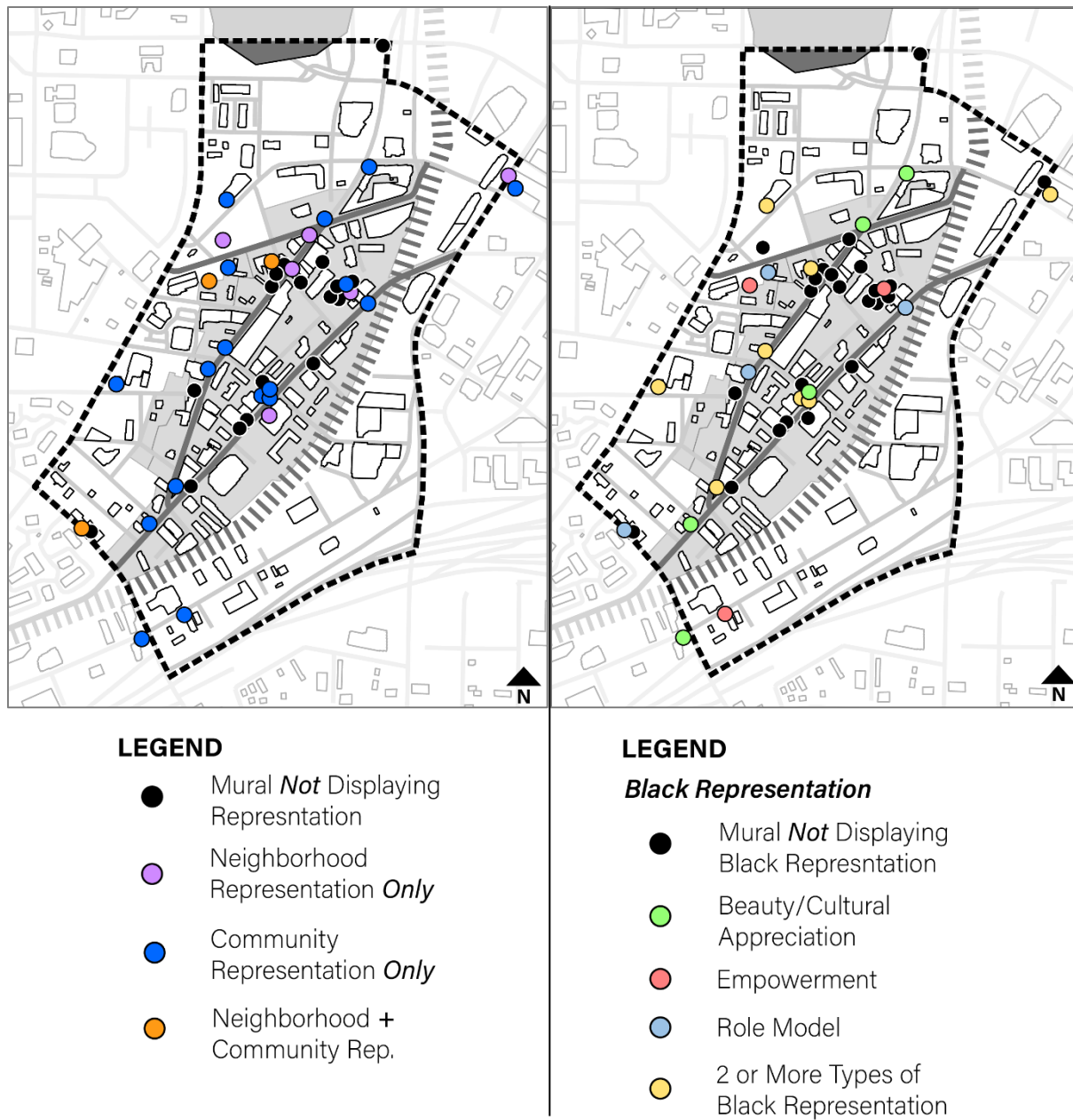


Figure 5.15: Castleberry Hill's mural locations with representation types.
Left: Murals differentiated based on neighborhood and/or community representation.
Right: Murals differentiated by Black representation types. (by author)

Inspirational

Murals for inspiration depict action or messaging that encourages positive thinking and behavior. Sometimes this inspiration can even be perceived from just from a subject's pose in the mural, like a person in a power pose (e.g., *God is Love* seen in Figure 5.16), standing defiantly, or carrying a look of hope. In Castleberry Hill there were many murals that could be considered inspirational, ranging from making general statements of love to encouraging action. It should be noted that many of the murals showing community representation or paying tribute to an influential figure can also provide inspiration. Furthermore, inspiration from murals can be perceived differently by different viewers, to the point that even aesthetic murals can provide creative motivation or inspire someone to spend more time outdoors to enjoy the artwork.



Figure 5.16: Examples of inspirational murals in Castleberry Hill. Top: *God is Love* showing a young Black boy in a pose of strength. Bottom: *Everybody Love Everybody* sharing a general statement of love (by author)

If an inspirational mural had intent for action towards a specific cause, then the mural could create a higher, more direct response from its audience, leading to a form of advocacy. Murals that function this way have messages or imagery that encourage a specific goal or bring attention to specific issues; it's not just a general statement of positivity. The specific goals shown in these murals in Castleberry Hill included rescuing domestic animals, gardening (which

can be taken as a literal response to the neighborhood's lack of grocery markets or an abstract response of growing the community/the next generation), voting, acknowledging the traumatic events in U.S. global and domestic affairs, and encouraging diversity and activism. These types of murals tend to be more visually complex, as they have to depict more information to get their message across. This complexity possibly explains why this category of intent has the least number of murals in Castleberry Hill, as interpreted by the author.



Figure 5.17: Examples of advocacy murals in Castleberry Hill. Top: *Kids Save Dogs, Dogs Save Kids* mural on the building of a local non-profit focused on encouraging children to be involved in rescuing domestic animals. Bottom: *Hear No, Say No, See No* mural shows a man using the U.S. flag to cover his ears, mouth, and eyes. This person is surrounded by dates of traumatic events in U.S. and global history, like the date of the start of the Korean War and the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.



Figure 5.17 (*continued*): Examples of advocacy murals in Castleberry Hill. *Growing Community* mural shows a diverse community (race, occupation, ability, age) gathering near an agricultural field. Each person is holding their own germinating plant to contribute.

In the end, the content analysis helped to interpret the function of each mural's visual content and found that several murals could have multiple types of function. Murals could be solely aesthetic for their environment, but when they became more than appealing images and colors, they tended to have layered messages that could be interpreted in a multitude of ways. For instance, a tribute mural could share an inspiring message from the subject it is honoring, or a mural with Black representation could also be advocating an issue concerning the local Black community. In turn, when the mural's function becomes more layered and more open to personal interpretation, each viewer can take away a different perspective, making the art more exploratory and engaging.

Also, when murals went beyond just aesthetic intent and showed more complex intent, they not only became more intriguing to decipher, but also became more of a tool for placemaking. Purely aesthetic murals are an artistically valuable beautification tool, but can also be considered generic in content, with the ability to be moved to any other place in Atlanta, or

even to any other city, and still fit into their surroundings. More complex murals are unique to Castleberry Hill, better representing the neighborhood's character and connecting to the neighborhood's history, community, and context. With this said, it is not surprising that mural content with complex function and representation seemed to be laid out mostly throughout the neighborhood, rather than concentrated in one area (Figure 5.12). As these murals cover most areas of Castleberry Hill, they help visualize the neighborhood's intangible aspects, reminding residents and stakeholders of the community they live and work in, while showing visitors a glimpse into their values, concerns, and identity.

Findings of Mural Spatial Analysis

In the initial spatial analysis of the Castleberry Hill murals, general notes on the murals' surrounding spaces were organized to identify and define the most notable spatial conditions. There are several spatial conditions that could be analyzed and discussed; too many for this one study to cover. Therefore, only the most relevant and interesting attributes were elaborated on, while any other features were noted in Chapter 6's section on future research. These elaborated attributes include mural locations based on neighborhood layout and street status, murals' proximity from each other, traffic potential, vegetation, scale and placement, spatial quality (engaging, connected, and maintained), and accessibility.

After taking what is essentially an inventory of the spatial conditions, an analysis was done to try to determine how these traits can positively or negatively affect the experience of a mural, how they can alter the interpretation of the mural, and how they can help show response to a mural. The following is the results of that analysis plus supporting graphics to address this study's first and second questions regarding how spatial conditions reflect neighborhood context and how they relate to murals' visual content.

Neighborhood Mural Locations – Central/Midground/Edge & Proximity to Other Murals

As previously mentioned, Castleberry Hill's murals seem to be mostly in the historic zone of the neighborhood, which is in the center of the neighborhood. Working towards better understanding this dynamic, Figure 5.18 was made to highlight a perceived neighborhood central, midground, and edge area. The central area is in the center of the neighborhood with high building density, good mix of residential and commercial space, and high-level of pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Midground is the area that surrounds the central area and has

lower building density, some mixed use, and existing pedestrian connections, but not as engaging streetscape. The edge has even lower building density, plus parts of the neighborhood that are disconnected by the railway line or that are less pedestrian-friendly, as sidewalks border high vehicular trafficked, high-speed streets. This layout emphasizes that there are murals almost throughout the neighborhood, except for northwest and east edge areas. Both areas lack building density and have unique disconnections from the neighborhood other than distance, which are the commercialization from the Mercedes-Benz Stadium and the physical divider of the railway line, respectively.

Figure 5.18 also separates the murals: black dots are murals that do not have representation and yellow dots are murals with some form of community or neighborhood representation. What is interesting from this distinction is that out of the seventeen murals that lack representation, over three-fourths of them are in the neighborhood's perceived central area. Perhaps this indicates that the central area, or the hub of activity, allows for more variety of murals, focusing on streetscapes aesthetics and creating livelier public spaces around the commercial, residential, and historic hub of the neighborhood. Additionally, it appears the edge of neighborhood emphasizes branding the neighborhood through its mural content and placement, defining its borders and marking its entrances for incoming traffic. This placement of murals seems strategic, even though it might be unintended and could be more influenced by available canvases or sheer coincidence. However, this arrangement of murals is arguably effective, helping identify the neighborhood as people enter it and pique their interest before they reach the vibrant, mixed-use, historic center. Although this might have been unplanned, this distinction of "creative/central" versus "representative/edge" is a local trend worth noting to see

how future mural locations and content pan out in Castleberry Hill and to see if there are effects to the neighborhood development.

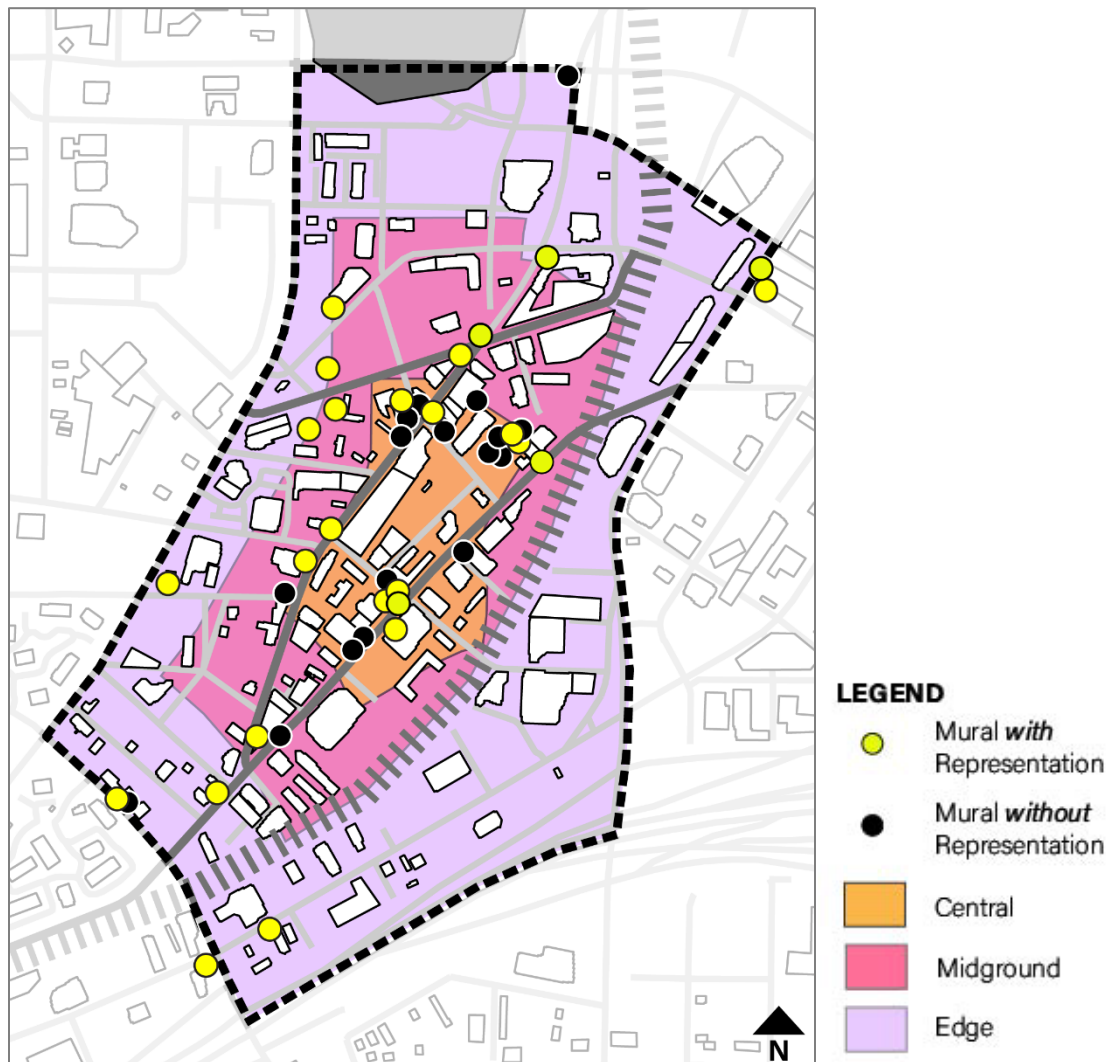


Figure 5.18: Castleberry Hill's mural locations according to neighborhood central, midground, and edge areas. (by author)

In terms of mural locations, it is also important to review the proximity of murals to each other and how this affects the murals and the experience of visiting them. Castleberry Hill is a relatively small neighborhood at less than a quarter square mile in size, making it possible to walk to all murals in the span of only a few hours. However, it is obviously more convenient to view murals when they are within a certain walking distance, or even within sight of each other. Murals within the central area of the neighborhood achieve this proximity relatively well, with

the majority of them being within a five-minute walking distance of at least twenty or more murals, as well as within eyesight of at least one other mural. Some murals within the midground also meet this high level of proximity, particularly the group of murals in the northwest edge, which seem to collectively improve the aesthetics of this corner as a neighborhood entrance for Mercedes-Benz visitors. In this corner's collection of murals, they create an eye-catching space that showcases a diverse array of mural content and welcomes visitors into the center of the neighborhood where they can find more public art (Figure 5.19).



Figure 5.19: Example of Castleberry Hill murals within viewing distance of each other. From left to right, a viewer can see the mural *Welcome to Castleberry* and parts of the murals *Atlanta Strong*, *Kobe Bryant Tribute*, and *Community Roots* all from the same parking lot. (by author)

In contrast, for more isolated murals that only have some murals within a five-minute walking distance and no other murals in sight, the journey to visit them becomes more inconvenient. The lure for these murals becomes more dependent on either personal determination to see that specific mural or the desire to visit or pass by the surface/space the mural occupies (i.e., patronize a business, need to drive through that path). Moreover, the experience of getting to these murals, which tend to be on the edge, commonly require longer walks, or even a drive, along less engaging and/or more vehicular-heavy streets. Therefore, the experience of these murals can be diminished due to this lack of proximity to other murals and lack of good connection, which is further discussed in the next section.

Anytime a mural is painted, the target audience and the purpose of the mural is often considered, and for these isolated murals this is even more significant because they more often lack the casual viewer. However, even in isolation, these edge murals could still be serving their intended purpose. Noticeably, many of these edge murals not only have content connected to the community's Black representation, but the content is also associated to the businesses they are attached to. *Mr. George* is on a historic Black barbershop founded by the man depicted on the mural, *Jamaican Diaspora* is on a Jamaican restaurant, and *Kids Save Dogs, Dogs Save Kids* is on a children's volunteer center focused on animal rescue. Having the murals directly reference the businesses they are attached to then allows them to serve as a type of advertisement, showing people what to expect if they visit their business. Even with this commercial approach, these murals are not controversial like the corporate mural advertisements discussed in Chapter 2, since these murals benefit small, local businesses that are tied to and serve the neighborhood. Moreover, their content is artistically unique to the neighborhood, while highlighting the businesses unique to Castleberry Hill. These isolated murals are seemingly motivated to benefit small businesses on the outskirts of the neighborhood by drawing visual attention, attracting people to new places, and making the journey to the neighborhood edge more rewarding.



Figure 5.20: *Dogs* mural on the south edge of Castleberry Hill. This mural is on the building of a local Black-owned dog grooming business. (Atlanta Street Art Map)

Neighborhood Street Status and Traffic Potential

When reviewing murals and their street locations in Castleberry Hill, there seems to be three types of street statuses for the murals based on the characteristics of the street: 1) on an engaged street, 2) off an engaged street, and 3) on a through street. Shown as red lines in Figure 5.21, an engaged street indicates a street that has both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, active business storefronts, nice planting beds or street trees, and adequate sidewalks. These streets are also well-maintained due to their historic status, presenting charm and attraction.

When a mural is *on* an engaged street, this means that it is parallel with the street, giving the street an artistic façade. When a mural is *off* an engaged street (purple in Figure 5.21), this means the mural is on a side street that is connected to the engaged street. It usually can be seen from the engaged street, attracting people down these side streets, but these avenues and alleys are not the most active or maintained streetscapes. Through streets (orange in Figure 5.21) are streets that prioritize vehicular traffic, so they are busy avenues for automobiles and rather unsafe, unfriendly, or disengaging to pedestrians. Therefore, murals on through streets tend to be sights for motorists passing through or entering instead of passers-by on foot. Lastly, there are murals that are not on any streets, which are in parking alleys and lots behind buildings, therefore they cannot be seen from public streets and sidewalks.

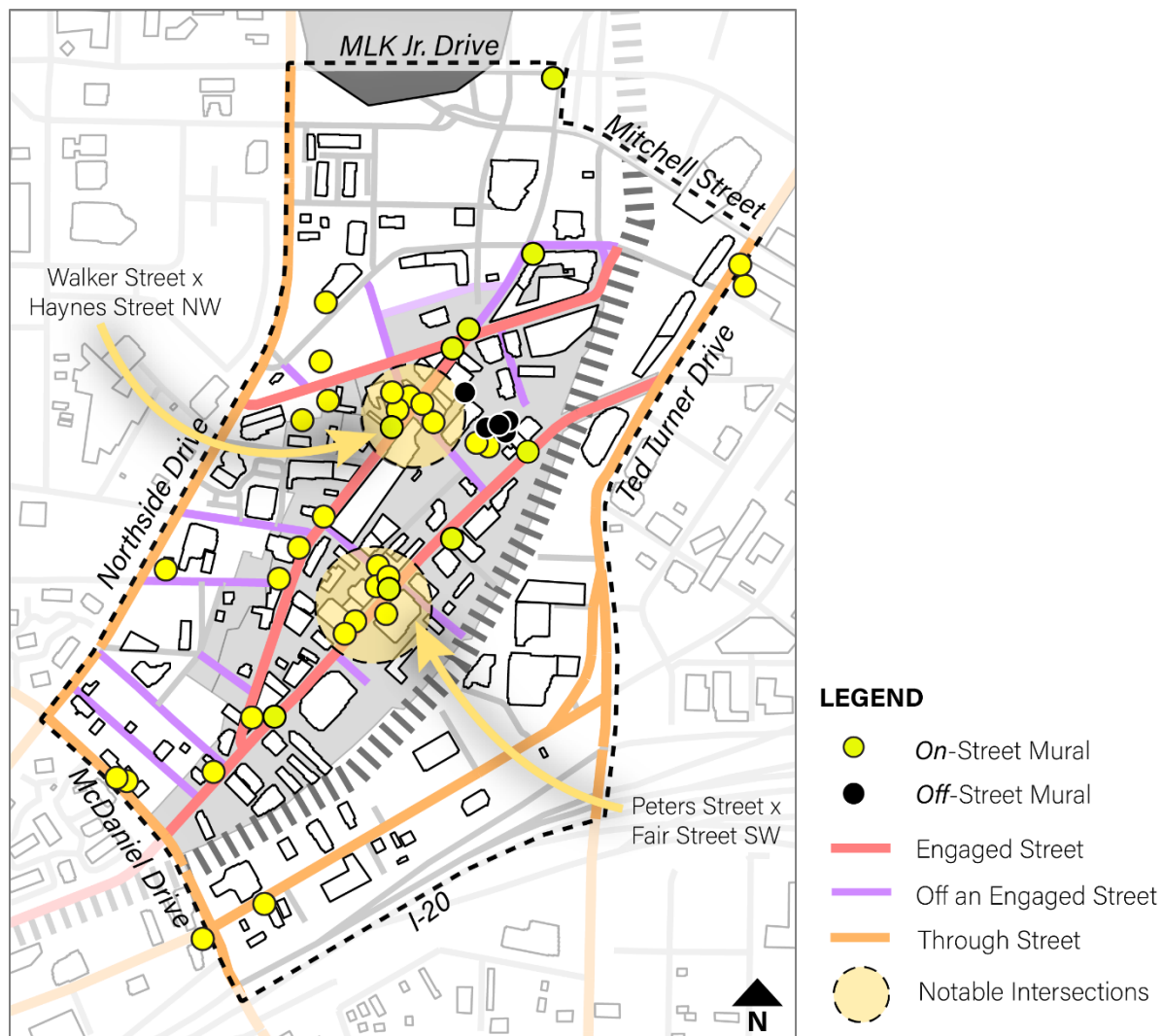


Figure 5.21: Castleberry Hill’s mural locations with street statuses. (by author; data from Georgia Department of Transportation (2022) and Strava (2022) helped define street statuses)

Engaged streets and murals are seemingly complementary of each other. Engaged streets typically encourage street social activity by first making streets feel comfortable and safe through design. For instance, there are not only sidewalks, but there are buffers like vegetation or parking lanes, that protect pedestrians from motorists; walkways and spaces are clear and maintained for movement, gathering, and accessibility; and building facades cater to the pedestrians using the streets. The latter point also ties with the social function of engaged streets by providing activities like shopping, visiting restaurants, and sightseeing, which give people

more of a reason to visit these streets. In Castleberry Hill, murals add to these engaged streets as they provide a form of activity for sightseeing, photo opportunities, and art appreciation. The murals also make the streets appear more active just with visuals, as the murals bring more color, vibrancy, and interest through their imagery and cover blank facades. Moreover, these murals help create visual connection of spaces or to encourage people to travel further down engaged streets or off to side streets, as the murals are an attraction, a path of art to follow, and a reason to walk farther than expected. These engaged streets can be engaging even without the murals, but they are enhanced by the artwork. Simultaneously, murals can always serve as an attraction no matter the setting, but engaged streets help increase their audience numbers and allow viewers to feel more comfortable, safe, and encouraged to see them.



Figure 5.22. Example of murals off an engaged street. *Black Woman with Flowers* and *Noodles* murals line two buildings on a side street that is connected to an engaged street, possibly drawing people down this street. At the end of this street is a glimpse of *When They Go Low, We Go High*, which may draw a person to continue to the end of the street.

In contrast, through streets can usually be rather bleak and unenjoyable for pedestrians. Cars, trucks, and other motorized vehicles dominate these streets and are allowed to drive at higher speeds, as these streets permit drivers to quickly travel to their destinations. These streets are typically wider laned and multi-laned with less vegetation and minimal pedestrian infrastructure, if any. On top of the lack of sidewalks, buffers, and/or crosswalks, the noise and

pollution that comes from the automobiles as well as the speed of the traffic also deter pedestrian usage by making these streets seem dangerous and unpleasant. In Castleberry Hill, most of these through streets are on the edge of the neighborhood, which benefits the murals in the central, historic hub where the streets can host more people and diverse activity. However, the murals on the neighborhood edge have the added ability to bring art and personality to these often uninspired, function-focused through streets. They can quickly catch the attention of passing motorists and be the front image and marketing of the neighborhood, while also potentially being one of the few exciting elements along a person's drive.



Figure 5.23: *Culture Makes Us Unique and Love Brings Us Together* mural that is on a through street. This mural stands alone on a building with unknown use and with no buffer between the sidewalk and the street. (by author)

High vehicular traffic on engaged and through streets can have both positive and negative effects for a mural. Benefits come mainly from higher viewership since there are generally more motorists than pedestrians on Atlanta's streets. This allows murals to reach more people, particularly outsiders of the community, and potentially even attract them to return to Castleberry Hill to visit. With higher viewership, there is also the opportunity to broadcast neighborhood concerns and issues, using murals for awareness, protest, and advocacy. However, viewing

murals when driving lessens the time to appreciate a mural's imagery or message as motorists only get glimpses, or at most a few minutes at a stoplight, to see the mural. Also, higher vehicular traffic can be detrimental to pedestrian mural viewership by discouraging foot traffic or distracting on-street viewers due to unsafe and noisy conditions. Therefore, for streets with higher vehicular traffic it becomes important to consider the goal of the mural and how its visual content will take advantage of, address, and/or adapt to the traffic. With the need to quickly catch motorist's attention and pass along the mural's message in a brief instance, through street murals should consider bolder, bigger images to be more noticeable and legible.

As for high pedestrian traffic, this feature can be beneficial for murals, showing more attractive and engaged streetscapes. Murals in public spaces or buffered sidewalks can be meeting points for people to gather. People would have more time to linger, more ability to get close to the mural to view it in detail, and more opportunities for social interaction when on foot. More people on the street also allows for more eyes on the street, decreasing the risk of vandalism to the murals and overall street crime. One negative of high pedestrian traffic could be overtourism, as mentioned in Chapter 2, but Castleberry Hill's murals are dispersed throughout the neighborhood and, content-wise, seem to cater to the community more so than to visitors. When murals are more spread out, they help draw people to different areas of the neighborhood; and when the mural is not pandering to tourists, then its content can better serve its local context and residents.

A final comment on streets and traffic is that some of the major intersections of the neighborhood seem to host the most murals, specifically the crossroads of Walker Street x Haynes Street SW and Peters Street x Fair Street SW (Figure 5.21). Intersections can be an advantageous location for murals, as intersections invite multiple directions of traffic, both

vehicular and pedestrian, while also requiring this traffic to stop for stop signs, stoplights, or crosswalks. This forces people who are passing by to pause and notice murals at these intersections, which allows more time for appreciation and engagement.

Mural Spatial Qualities – Vegetation, Placement & Scale, and Engagement/Connection/Maintenance

Moving away from locations and street statuses of murals, there are three mural qualities that were observed regarding the actual space and surroundings that the murals occupied. The first is vegetation, referring to the plantings around the murals. In an urban setting, vegetation tends to be either manicured landscaping that shows care or weedy overgrowth that shows neglect. Although these ideas of cues to care (Nassauer 1995) and natural beauty are being challenged in modern-day landscape design, for this study it is important to relate the vegetation types in how they frame the murals. Vegetation can be a positive feature for a mural urban setting, making spaces feel more alive if the vegetation is thriving and providing color, texture, and biodiversity to the space. Trees can provide literal framing of murals, while also providing comfort and safety to pedestrian viewers in the form of sun shading and street buffers.



Figure 5.24: *Beloved Community* is across the street from a line of large oak trees that provide shade for pedestrian viewers. (by author)

However, when vegetation is not considered or maintained in regard to a mural, then it can become a distraction or an obstruction to the mural. Plants can grow on the mural, covering its imagery and potentially damaging the mural or the integrity of its surface. The foliage of trees and large shrubs can block certain views or certain parts of a mural if its growth is not maintained or if it planted without the consideration of mural viewership. Of course, sometimes the mural comes after the vegetation was already established, which seems to occur often in the historic parts of Castleberry Hill. Unfortunately, these already existing street trees tend to be multi-stemmed and have lower foliage which blocks full views of the murals from the street (Figure 5.25).



Figure 5.25: Examples of vegetation blocking Castleberry Hill murals. (by author)

If a mural is appreciated and valued, then the vegetation around it should be maintained in way that complements the mural. It could be telling if vegetation is left to overgrow on top of a mural, perhaps showing a lack of interest and investment into the mural and a need to update/replace it. However, if canvases are limited and one is forced to paint on a surface that already has intruding vegetation, then one unique way to address this issue would be to find ways to incorporate the vegetation with the mural content. In *Tiger and Panda* (Figure 5.26), there is some plant overgrowth that might be unintended, but at the same time, this makes the tiger appear as if it is leaping out of the vegetation. There are murals outside of Castleberry Hill that have experimented with this combination of plants and mural art (Figure 5.27). If vegetation can be incorporated with the murals, this could be an opportunity to create a more interactive and innovative art piece as the mural content directly integrates into its spatial features.



Figure 5.26: *Tiger and Panda* mural has shrubs creating visual interest, making the tiger look like it's jumping out of the vegetation. (by author)



Figure 5.27: Example of a mural done in Brazil by Fábio Gomes Trindade that incorporates surrounding vegetation into the painting. (Fábio Gomes Trindade, 2021)

The ability to have large, open views of a mural versus smaller, close-up views is another spatial quality to note based on mural scale and placement. Some murals are designed and placed in ways that allow them to have a broader audience, like *Kings Become Legends* (Figure 5.28) and *Beloved Community*, which are the neighborhood's largest murals painted on the sides of a seven-story building. These two murals can be seen from far distances, and when approached

they are quite impressive. A viewer might feel overshadowed by their size, but the mural messaging is inspiring, making the murals less intimidating and more emboldening. Mural scale and content work together to give a grander, positive message that anyone can be affected by. Seemingly, with such a huge platform comes the responsibility to depict something more inclusive and inspiring, if not bold and important to convey.



Figure 5.28: *Kings Become Legends* mural, a large-scale mural in Castleberry Hill.

Most murals in Castleberry Hill are placed on street level, mostly due to the neighborhood building character (i.e., historic buildings built no more than four stories tall) and availability of surfaces. Yet, this ground-level scale is effective as most people are able walk up to the murals and see them in-detail. The mural content can potentially be more intricate, since they are smaller in scale, and more intimate, as they appear more approachable and contained within the streetscape.



Figure 5.29: Smaller-scale and/or more intricate murals in Castleberry Hill. Top: *158 Train* mural is a small mural on a residential building door. Bottom: *Matador* is on ground level and off of an engaged street, so it can feel more approachable.

In either case of large- or small-scale views of murals, it is important to be aware of who can see the murals and how the viewing experience might affect them. Larger murals have the potential to be impressive by sheer size, but one must consider how they are viewed from a distance and from the ground, and how these vantage points affect the viewer. Smaller murals can be more intimate, inviting people into their visuals and to examine the details, which allows

the opportunity to be complex. The *Atlanta Strong* mural in Castleberry Hill stands out by achieving both qualities. It is a large mural, spanning two long sides of a 1-story storage warehouse, making it difficult to view all at once. However, the mural content covers many themes and subjects, even serving many functions through its visual content, as it honors the business' founder and many other Atlantan Black figures; refers to the neighborhood's ties to the railroad and the Black community; shows imagery of community growth, identity, and pride; and advocates for civil rights (Figure 5.30).



Figure 5.30: *Atlanta Strong* mural covering two long, uninterrupted walls of a storage building. It is a large-scale mural, but still has much detail and covers many themes. (by author)

The last spatial quality to discuss is whether a mural is placed in an engaged, connected and maintained space. An engaged space refers to a space that, even without a mural, would attract visitors and foot traffic. This could mean active streetscapes, like engaged streets with accessible physical connections, popular local businesses, or public gathering spaces. A maintained space is usually engaged space, but refers more to the upkeep of the space, like whether there are adequate sidewalks, little trash, and maintained buildings. People are encouraged to visit, linger, and gather in these engaged and maintained spaces, and murals are only one of many attractive features of these spaces. Otherwise, when a space is disengaging (e.g., a parking lot), disconnected (e.g., a neighborhood area without sidewalks) or dilapidated (e.g., an old vacant lot), then the murals might be the only attraction. This can decrease viewership of a mural and make a mural feel detached from the community when it is not tied with more social value, physical connection, and/or cues to care.

An example of a mural that lacks an engaged, connected, maintained space is the *MLK Vote Again* mural. Although this mural depicts Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the famous and revered Atlanta civil rights leader, along with an inspiring message to continuously vote, this mural is placed along a retaining wall for an old surface parking lot. The only building nearby is an isolated apartment building buffered with large pine trees, and this area sits along a busy vehicular “through” street lacking pedestrian-friendly elements like street trees. Prior to the mural installation this wall was covered in graffiti taggings and surrounded by trash; today, this is still the case. The mural words “Vote Again” have even been covered up by graffiti and the remaining portrait of Dr. King is surrounded by taggings. Possibly, the physical distance of the mural from the central area of the neighborhood can be a reason for the lack of care shown for this mural, despite its inspiring imagery and messaging. Thus, this distance compounded by the

lack of engagement, connection, and maintenance of this space seemingly diminished the care for this mural and left it vulnerable to vandalism.



Figure 5.31: *MLK Vote Again* mural vandalized and in a disengaged space. Top-Left: The original mural. Top-Right: The tagging over the mural's words. Bottom: The mural's space, which is a parking lot located on the edge of the neighborhood by a busy through street. There is litter all around this space and only one nearby residential building which is separated by the pine trees. (Top-left from Atlanta Street Art Map, 2021; Top-right and bottom by author)

Furthermore, *Welcome to Castleberry Hill* and *Atlanta Strong*, which are also located in this northwest area (respectively along another parking lot retention wall and the back of storage warehouse) also have some taggings atop of the paintings, as well as graffiti painted on surrounding surfaces. These taggings are not as severe as the *MLK Vote Again* cover-ups, but this condition is noteworthy since this area seems to have the most taggings out of all the murals

in Castleberry Hill. Moreover, the other two murals facing this corner also have interesting spatial qualities. Both *Kobe Bryant Tribute* and *Community Roots* have fences in front of them possibly protecting them from vandalism, but these fences are an eyesore for the murals and have not prevented the overgrowth of vegetation and accumulation of litter. Therefore, it seems this area of murals is affected by a lack of spatial engagement that would help prevent mural alterations and would help with mural upkeep and appreciation. However, these murals all have a form of community or neighborhood representation, allowing them to connect to their context.



Figure 5.32: Taggings and trash by murals in Castleberry Hill's northwest corner. Top: Taggings on *Welcome to Castleberry Hill*. Bottom: Trash and dilapidated fence surrounding *Kobe Bryant Tribute*. (by author)

One purpose of muralism is to improve and enrich neglected spaces; therefore, it is not surprising to find many murals in less engaging spaces, like Castleberry Hill's northwest corner. However, these observations show that when planning murals in these types of disengaged spaces, one must be aware of the murals' vulnerabilities to vandalism and further neglect. Since the only remaining part of the *MLK Vote Again* mural is Dr. King's portrait, perhaps using similarly inspiring imagery and more compelling messaging can cause hesitation in tagging. Also, it should be noted that within graffiti artist circles, the muralist commissioned to do the work could have an influence over whether their mural is tagged out not. If the muralist is respected by the local graffiti artists, then there is less chance that their work will be vandalized. In the instant case of *MLK Vote Again*, it seems that the vandalism was more likely a result that the words lost meaning after Georgia's 2020 and 2021 elections, rather than being an affront to the artist.

In any case, murals should still be used in less inviting and less attractive spaces for the purpose of beautification and inclusion in the mural arts movement. It is important to maintain that murals are a public art form; thus, they should be accessible to all and bring benefits to all types of spaces. Similar to all other spatial conditions and where murals end up, muralists are most often limited to what surfaces are available, even if they are in undesirable spaces. In the end, the mural content should be considered more thoroughly to ensure that mural messaging is more effective to and garners value and appreciation for long-lasting impact. It is the responsibility of the muralist and those who commission and develop the mural design to decide how they can adapt their art to address this issue and whether they are willing to change artistic vision to fit the space.

An Overview of Mural Visual and Physical Access

Ultimately, public mural art is meant to be democratic and accessible to all. Therefore, one of the most important factors of murals is their accessibility. Muralism is first and foremost a visual artform, making visual access a key factor to a mural's success. Visual access plus thought-provoking content work together to make murals more impactful as an artform that can reach a wider audience and transform public areas into meaningful spaces. From what was previously discussed, high visual access can be described in many ways for different people, but for this study, it seemed most useful to define it as 24/7 access to see a mural with little to no distractions or obstructions. Under this definition, there was a range of visual access for the forty-three murals in Castleberry Hill. Murals with low visual access can be found in circumstances like on a garage door that is retracted during certain times of the day, behind parked cars that block viewing, or seen only through slits of a gate that surrounds the mural space. Having full access to view and allowing people to enjoy a mural whenever they desire makes murals truer to their original intent of being accessible to all; thus, higher visual access should be a priority whenever possible.



Figure 5.33: *Sea Turtler* mural with high visual access. (Atlanta Street Art Map, 2022)



Figure 5.34: Castleberry Hill murals with affected visual access. Top: *Noodles* mural which is on a retractable garage door. Bottom: *Braves and Koi Fish* mural which is often blocked by parked cars. (by author)

Moreover, physical access of murals considers their visual access, plus whether the mural is physically approachable. One of the main impairments that makes murals less physically accessible is when they are in private enclosed spaces. Several Castleberry Hill murals are painted within gated parking lots for businesses and apartments, which are only open to customers and residents. Even if considering the gate as a positive feature for the murals as it protects the murals, a gated mural feels exclusive and detached from its neighborhood context.

These murals lose some of their democratic value when their spaces become more like private galleries with access only afforded to certain people.

Lastly, it should be noted that the murals that lacked the most visual and physical access were mostly found within a series of three enclosed, adjacent parking lots that served both commercial and residential properties (Figure 5.33). These lots could not be accessed unless you were either a paying customer or a resident, and observations made by the author were done three different ways for each lot: through the fencing, when a gate was left open by accident, and when a parking attendant permitted the author to walk in. Out of the six murals in these spaces, four of them lacked representation of the community and/or the neighborhood. Therefore, it seemed that the most deliberately inaccessible, exclusive spaces to view murals also had the least connection between its mural content and its community context.

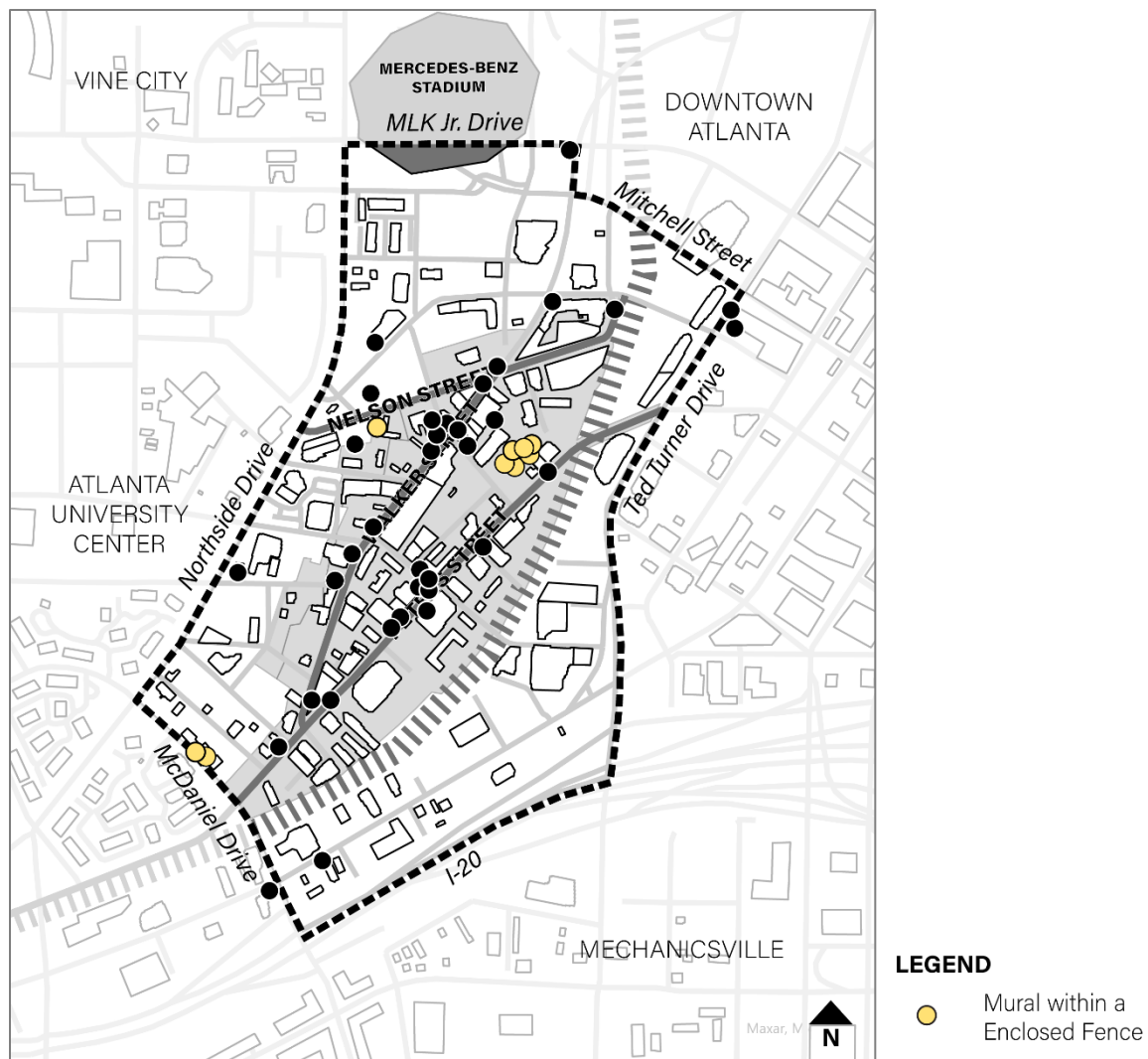


Figure 5.35: Castleberry Hill's murals that are enclosed within a locked fence. (by author)



Figure 5.36: Fences that blocked physical access to multiple murals in Castleberry Hill's central area. Murals within these pictured fences are *Atlanta Sport*, *Fox and Lanterns*, *Castleberry Market*, *Growing Community*, and *Braves and Koi Fish*. (by author)

Placemaking through Castleberry Hill's Muralism and Future Mural Development

In addressing the third question of how this research can inform future mural developments, it is best to outline the major takeaways from this analysis of Castleberry Hill's murals. First, when looking at the neighborhood layout of Castleberry Hill and its mural locations, the mural locations appear to help define, reflect, and reinforce the local context. The center of the neighborhood within the historic district best aligns to what is described as effective

placemaking by Project for Public Spaces; therefore, it is not surprising that the majority of the neighborhood murals are found in this area. The central area has the four main qualities of a great place, including accessibility, engaging activities, a comforting and charming image, and sociability, and the murals contribute to each of these qualities. However, there is also an attempt at using muralism in other neighborhood areas to improve them along placemaking ideals.

Regarding the quality of placemaking accessibility, the high proximity of murals in the central area helps create visual connections of space, which, in turn, improves spatial cohesiveness and perceived walkability of the neighborhood center. For instance, in Figure 5.37, there is a mural around the corner of the building, providing art in the foreground and background of this space and enticing people to walk further to see more murals. Meanwhile, the edges of the neighborhood were perceived as more distant, despite the fact that Castleberry Hill is overall a fairly walkable neighborhood due to its small size. Although there are other physical attributes affecting streetscape accessibility, including traffic, sidewalk maintenance, and building density, murals seem to also impact what is visually perceived as pedestrian-friendly, connected, and active versus what is perceived as isolated.



Figure 5.37: An example of Castleberry Hill's murals that occupy the foreground and background of space creating perceived connection. The background mural might help attract curious people around the corner to see more.

Another form of accessibility is that murals are a publicly accessed art form, bringing creativity and beauty to all people, which also promotes accessible placemaking activities in the neighborhood. Mural art tours are one activity that directly derives from a neighborhood's mural movement, which can help create more engaging places. Murals can also serve as surfaces for education and direct engagement with viewers, as introduced in Chapter 2. Castleberry Hill's mural art promotes these activities, including a mural tour route (provided by Atlanta Street Art Map) and mural content that educates and informs others on neighborhood history and community. Moreover, murals can serve as spaces to gather, backdrops for events, and content to talk about, making places like Castleberry Hill more active.

In bringing art to the streets, murals decorate space and can lead to a sense of comfort and safety through visuals. Through color, imagery, and messaging, muralism can create a positive image of a neighborhood by literally beautifying spaces, while also positively representing the community in ways that they want to be seen. As Castleberry Hill has murals throughout its neighborhood, including at its entrances and in some physically neglected or disconnected neighborhood edges, its local mural movement shows intent to create a more overall welcoming and appealing image. Also, murals themselves are an attraction, drawing more people out onto the streets and increasing sense of safety in numbers. In areas that lack murals in Castleberry Hill, there seems to be a lack of this charm, activity, and security. Notably, the neighborhood's mural development barely passes the north end of the neighborhood's historic zone, which reflects the lack of character and local control that surrounds the commercialized Mercedes-Benz Stadium area.

Additionally, as more people are attracted to the murals, this increases the chance of social interaction. Murals become a point in placemaking's triangulation, serving as another stop

among businesses and public street amenities that encourages people to pause and notice, meet, and engage with one another. Castleberry Hill's mural locations provide these mural-driven social opportunities throughout the neighborhood and at critical points, like street intersections. Furthermore, as many of these murals represent their local context, they also provide the opportunity to provide an overall sense of social, cultural, and community pride and unity. The neighborhood's central area seems to better achieve this sociability than the rest of the neighborhood, as the murals are tied to more engaging, connected, and maintained spaces. However, there is potential for spaces in other parts of Castleberry Hill to gain more social value as murals development expands beyond its epicenter and serves to represent the neighborhood.

A second takeaway from this study of Castleberry Hill is that aesthetically focused murals are valuable to enhance spatial visuals, but murals that have representation of the neighborhood and/or the community, even in the slightest way, can make them more unique and more connected to their local context. Decorative murals can help with the image of the neighborhood and make streets seem more walkable and livelier, which supports placemaking, but they are relatively generic and lack visual connection to their context, making them less meaningful. Murals with tributes, inspiration, and advocacy have more meaning and messaging on top of their artistic value and can reflect the neighborhood's history and needs directly. Therefore, the mural content that seems to best serve placemaking is the one that represents its context. Murals with community and neighborhood representation help define their surrounding area and allow residents to claim their space, create a sense of identity and belonging, and showcase their neighborhood values and concerns to others. They also support readability of space for outsiders, as the uniqueness of the murals helps passers-by and visitors to notice and

identify where they are more easily. Overall, representation in mural content can serve a neighborhood better when it comes to creating meaningful, distinct place.

Third, space, as defined by location, quality, and engagement levels, must be thoroughly considered when developing mural goals and content. Where a mural can be painted cannot always be chosen and will not always be optimal, but when given a disconnected, disengaging, and/or dilapidated space it is important to examine how a mural could affect the space, and vice versa. Therefore, a space with existing negative qualities could possibly need more consideration towards its mural content and more themes that are contextually compelling and representative in order to raise the value of the space and the mural itself. Although this might mean compromising some artistic vision, this approach to choosing mural content based on the spatial quality could benefit the local appreciation of a space and the mural.

Fourth, murals are democratic in nature, by content, art-making process, and accessibility. This study saw that although visual and physical accessibility of a mural cannot always be controlled, they are still important to consider, as they affect the experience and interpretation of the mural. Lack of accessibility of a mural can cause perceptions of exclusivity and detachment, while full accessibility can feel inclusive and empowering. In this way, it is important to remember the visual and physical access of murals, as this can affect mural reception and how they serve as a placemaking tool for the community.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Muralism is on a positive trend in the U.S. as its plethora of benefits and ease of application become more appreciated. Murals are one of the most democratic forms of art in the world, having the potential to beautify, restore, empower, inspire, and advocate with visuals that are accessible to all. It is no wonder that every year, more and more cities are being recognized for their growing public art scene, making their urban environments more vibrant, enriched, and attractive. Atlanta, Georgia is no exception, and its Castleberry Hill neighborhood is one of many mural hotspots for the city.

This paper used Castleberry Hill as a case study into the relationships between mural visual content, spatial conditions, and community context to see how murals can be better tools in placemaking. Not many previous mural studies have considered spatial conditions in-depth, so this study sought to produce its own methodological approach and to provide new information on mural development for communities and neighborhoods. Data and on-site observations were collected regarding mural, spatial, and contextual information, then used to conduct content and spatial analyses. This data was used to identify characteristics of the murals, describe these characteristics, interpret how these characteristics might impact murals and/or their spaces, discuss how these characteristics relate to each other, and, finally, see if there were any major takeaways.

In the end, this case study of Castleberry Hill found a way to define mural content by functions – aesthetic, representation, and inspirational – and that many of these functions are

overlapping. For murals to be more socially connected to and be visually unique to their local environment, themes of community and neighborhood representation become significant. Representative mural content can show tangible or intangible traits unique to the neighborhood or depict the people who make up the community. Over half of Castleberry Hill's murals had representation by either branding the neighborhood through self- and historic-references or providing connections to its Black community and history. In this way, the murals could provide service beyond beautification by defining and claiming place, creating and re-enforcing shared identities, and advertising and advocating neighborhood issues and goals.

Additionally, considering space in terms of location, quality, and engagement are important when developing murals for that space. If a space has negative spatial conditions, like disconnected, dilapidated, and disengaged, then this is not to say that this space is unfit for a mural. On the contrary, murals are meant to be aesthetic enhancements for a space and should be utilized to improve neglected places. However, with this challenge, it becomes important to consider how the mural content will affect the space, and how the space will affect the mural. Therefore, in this consideration, sometimes mural content will need to be adapted to be more appropriate for the space, to reflect or elevate its surroundings, and potentially lead to a better appreciation of the mural content and/or space.

Lastly, public murals are shown to play a major role in placemaking. Placemaking is meant to strengthen the connections between people and place, and as shown in Castleberry Hill, murals can do so based on their visual content and their placement. The neighborhood murals were not the only factors in local placemaking, but their usage helped define and reinforce the local context and promote placemaking qualities, like accessibility, activity, image, and sociability. Overall, murals can represent the people by giving them a space to be seen, while

having the potential to visually show what the people value or critique in their neighborhood, history, community, or in broader society, bringing more visible meaning to place.

Future Research

Muralism and their spatial relations are still a nascent research topic. The scope of this study was limited by time and resources, constraining it to observational methods and descriptive analyses within a neighborhood's context. However, in doing so, this research was able to add to the study of murals in a way that has never been done before by identifying and defining mural spatial and contextual attributes and providing some insight on the positive and negative effects of these attributes. This paper also recommended ways to turn spatial challenges in mural development into opportunities and approaches for improved placemaking through muralism. There is still much to study in this topic, which means future research can be approached and/or continued in many different directions.

Within Castleberry Hill, this study can be continued to collect more information about the murals, to gain more perspective from mural stakeholders, or to evaluate responses of the residents and visitors. From a data collection point of view, there are some mural information gaps that could have been addressed with more in-depth literature/data searches and frequent site visits. Such information included confirming more specific building uses associated with murals, verifying how outdoor spaces are used throughout different days of the week and times of year, and seeing how murals would be viewed at different times of the day, including at night. Furthermore, there is the process of how the murals were made, which with this information, could explain aspects of mural content and spatial conditions, while providing some insight to how these murals may be perceived.

As previously mentioned, one limitation to this study was a lack of community member and stakeholder input. Involving mural stakeholders in a future study would be another approach to receiving more information, and these stakeholders could be muralists, business owners, community leaders, city planners, mural organizers, residents, and viewers of the murals. Stakeholders can be interviewed to help confirm information already discovered, like perceived mural function and intent or spatial impacts of murals, or provide new information, like maintenance and investment into the murals, public spaces, or the artmaking process. Moreover, surveys could have provided broader insight, allowing for responses from a range of people in how they might interpret the murals and their spatial conditions. Additionally, if this study were to continue with a focus on Castleberry Hill, it could mean continuing observations of the developments in mural content, installment/removal/replacement, spatial conditions, and context in the neighborhood over time.

Outside of Castleberry Hill, future studies can compare the murals in different neighborhoods of Atlanta, while expanding the context of Castleberry Hill. Through a citywide study, one could identify more trends in mural content, space, and placemaking, seeing if there are any leading forces or other interesting findings. Moreover, this study's methodology can be applied to other neighborhoods in Atlanta and in other cities, observing existing murals and/or applying to plans of future mural development.

Future Application

Murals, like any other artifact of the built environment, are a tool for impact and can affect their surroundings in so many ways. Landscape designers, urban planners, community members, and local residents all have the ability to use muralism to improve their urban

environments and create better places. All in all, this study and its findings are most applicable when it comes to how mural movements develop moving forward and how people at all stages of design intervention can better utilize muralism as a tool for placemaking and spatial enhancement. The methodology can give some framework in how design professionals and mural stakeholders can approach muralism in neighborhood placemaking by providing ideas and elements to consider for content, space, and context. Meanwhile, the research findings provide initial insight as to what might make mural projects more effective or to judge how mural developments are progressing. There is still much to learn, but this study hopes to provide some basis for design professionals and community members to follow so that murals can better serve their communities and places.

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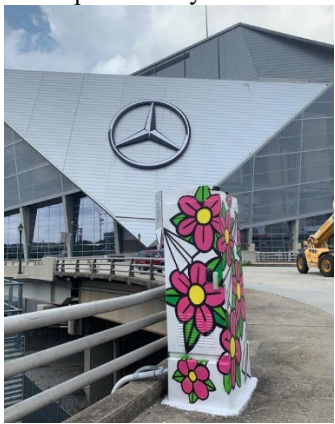


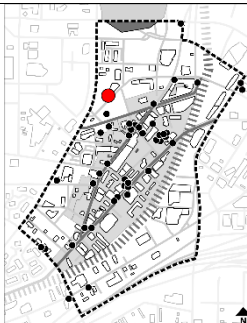

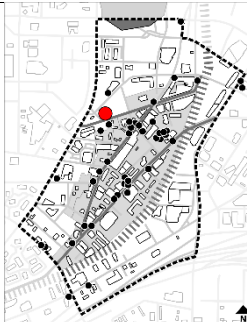
APPENDIX


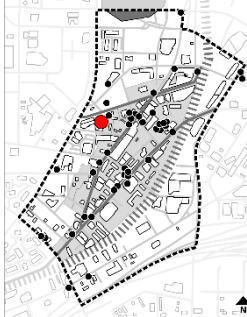

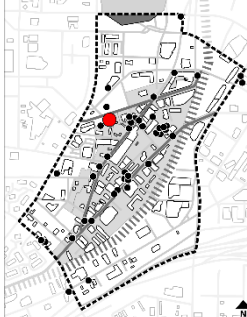

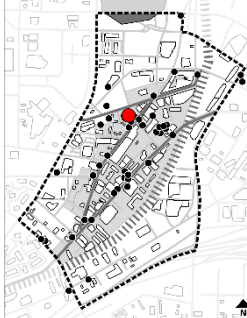
Appendix A: Castleberry Hill's Black-owned businesses identified by the author. Businesses in bold had murals on them.


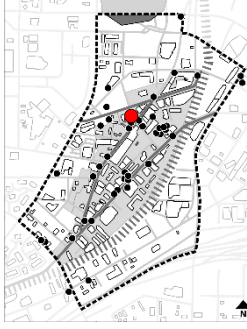

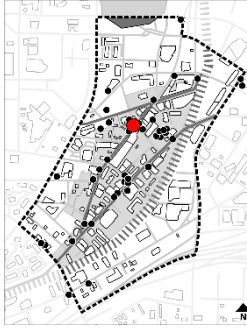

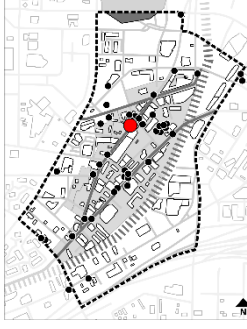

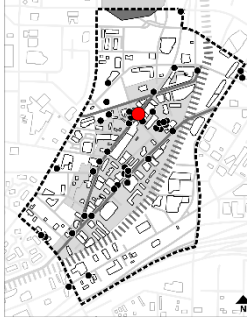
- 1. Peters Street Station – Peters Street**
2. Escobar Restaurant & Tapas – Peters Street
3. Coffee Loft – Peters Street
4. Howard's Barber Shop – Peters Street
5. Weave Loft – Peters Street
6. CRU Hookah Lounge – Peters Street
7. Beautiful Dollhouse Salon – Peters Street
8. Art Box ATL – Peters Street
9. Frost Bistro – Peters Street
10. Kwys Denim – Peters Street
11. The Projects Restaurant and Lounge – Peters Street
12. The Spinning Pie – Peters Street
13. 255 Tapas Lounge – Peters Street
14. Off the Hook Barber Shop – Peters Street
- 15. Parlor – Peters Street**
16. The Dollhouse 244 – Peters Street
17. FreddyO's Tees & Quotes – Peters Street
18. The Glam Shop – Peters Street
19. Be iinked!! – Peters Street
20. Takii Tattoos – Peters Street
21. Kingdom Glam – Peters Street
22. Salon Deon – Peters Street
23. Old Lady Gang Southern Cuisine – Peters Street
24. Brows By Ave – Peters Street
25. Kiss Ultra Lounge – Whitehall Street SW
- 26. A&M Barber Shop – McDaniel Street SW**
27. Har Unlimited Barbershop – McDaniel Street SW
28. CZ Smokezz BBQ – McDaniel Street SW
- 29. AMG Atlanta Meet the Groomers – McDaniel Street**
30. RanaDene Hair – Mangum Street SW
31. GQ The Barber – Mangum Street SW
32. Ally Allure Esthetics – Mangum Street SW
33. Cut Creators Salon Suites – Mangum Street SW
34. Threadz Weave Salon Elite – Nelson Street SW
35. Versus ATL – Nelson Street
36. Brooklyn Tea – Nelson Street
37. Iwi Fresh Garden Day Spa and Atlanta Hot Shave – Nelson Street
38. Wine Shoe – Nelson Street
39. Libra Loft Hair Salon – Nelson Street
40. ChrissyK's Club – Walker Street
41. Closette – Walker Street


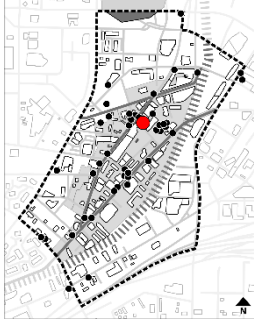

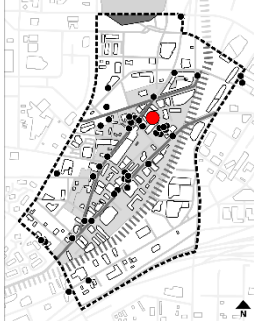

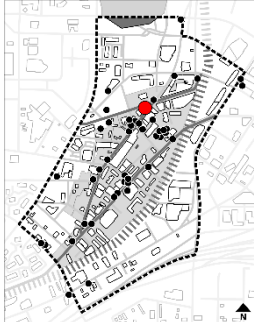
- 42. The Glam Trap – Walker Street
- 43. Comedy Hype – Walker Street**
- 44. JuTox Juice Bar & Wellness Center – Walker Street
- 45. Herbin Co. - Luxury Handmade Hats – Walker Street
- 46. Kenny T's Apparel, Branding and Marketing – Walker Street**
- 47. Adrian Shelby Photography – Walker Street
- 48. Atlanta 211 – Walker Street
- 49. Walker Street Mini Storage – Walker Street**
- 50. Neyow's of Atlanta – Walker Street
- 51. Liveology Yoga Studios – Walker Street
- 52. Carl M Williams Funeral Directors – Larkin Street SW
- 53. ZuCot Gallery – Centennial Olympic Park Drive (largest AA owned gallery)
- 54. Fellowship – Centennial Olympic Park Drive
- 55. Atlantucky Brewing – Northside Drive
- 56. Rosie's Café – Northside Drive
- 57. Paschal's – Northside Drive
- 58. Dat Fire Jerk Chicken – Northside Drive**
- 59. Russel Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship – Fair Street


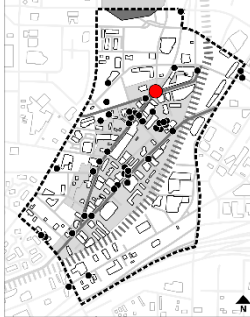

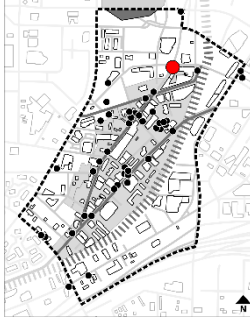

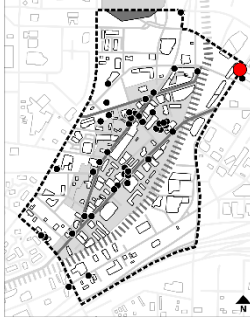
Appendix B: Summarized analysis notes of each mural in Castleberry Hill. All images taken by author unless noted otherwise.


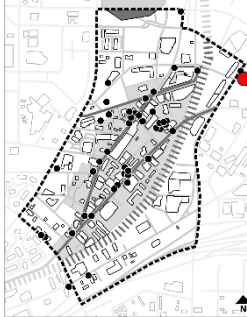

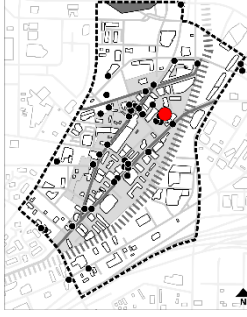

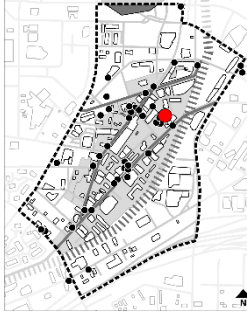
<p><i>Utility Box 1 – Pink Flowers</i> Name provided by author</p>  <p>(Source: Sohe Solutions Instagram)</p>		<p>Content: Aesthetic, pink flowers Location: Edge, separate from other murals, at an intersection, close to Mercedes-Benz Stadium Spatial Quality: High vehicular traffic; low pedestrian traffic – not pedestrian friendly; no vegetation or trash Access: High visual access to people passing by in vehicles; physical access could be impaired by concerns of safety due to vehicular traffic</p>
<p><i>MLK Vote Again</i> Name provided by author</p> 		<p>Content: Portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with “Vote Again” text. Black representation, inspirational, advocacy Location: Edge, close to a through street, in a parking lot Spatial Quality: High vehicular traffic; low pedestrian traffic – not pedestrian friendly; trash Access: Taggings that surround the mural now distract from the mural limiting visual access; other than distance from the neighborhood center, there is good physical access.</p>
<p><i>Welcome to Castleberry Hill</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Rainbow, geometric pattern with “Welcome to Castleberry Hill” text Location: Edge, on a through street, in a parking lot on a retaining wall Spatial Quality: High vehicular traffic; low pedestrian traffic; some trash Access: Very high visual access to people passing by in vehicles and entering Castleberry Hill from the northwest edge; physically accessible to pedestrians, but is in a disengaged area of the neighborhood, meaning there would be little reason for a person to walk to this area other than for the mural</p>


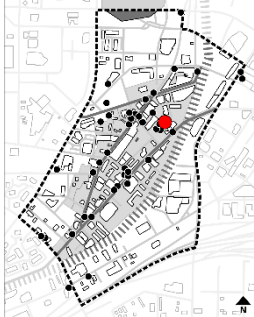
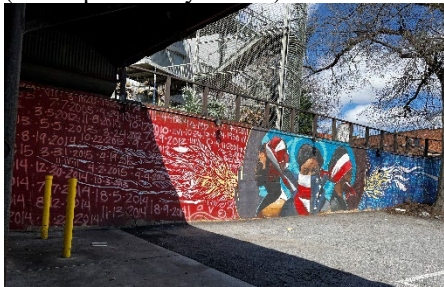
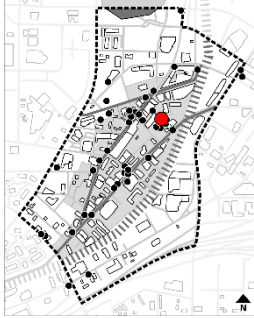

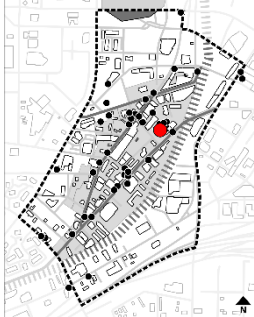
<p><i>Community Roots</i> (Name taken from text on the mural)</p> 		<p>Content: Rainbow, geometric pattern with “Community Roots” text; four young people wearing HBCU shirts and holding produce; one older Black man holding a garden tool; vegetation painted on the side</p> <p>Location: Edge/Midground, on a through street, on a retaining wall below residential parking</p> <p>Spatial Quality: High vehicular traffic; low pedestrian traffic; some trash</p> <p>Access: Visual access somewhat blocked by street trees, but if can walk past trees onto grass then high visual access; physically accessible to pedestrians, but is in a disengaged area of the neighborhood, meaning there would be little reason for a person to walk to this area other than for the mural</p>
<p><i>Kobe Bryant Tribute</i> Name provided by author</p> 		<p>Content: Purple and gold Lakers Basketball colors with “RIP Kobe Gigi” text; painted basketball backboard</p> <p>Location: Midground, on a through street, on a freestanding wall</p> <p>Spatial Quality: High vehicular traffic; low pedestrian traffic; trash; makeshift basketball halfcourt</p> <p>Access: High visual access to people passing by in vehicles; within an enclosed, locked fence</p>
<p><i>Atlanta Strong</i> (Name The Loss Prevention website)</p> 		<p>Content: Large mural with many types of imagery, including portrait of the founder of the Russell company, a train engine, a peach, MLK, the Atlanta Braves logo, people protesting. Although there is a lot of content, it does not have to be viewed all at once since imagery is not connected</p> <p>Location: Central, both on a through street and off of an engaged street, on a Black-owned business, at an intersection</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Some trash, some vegetation, cannot see the mural all at once because on two different sides of the building, busy intersection for pedestrians and vehicles</p> <p>Access: High visual and physical access</p>

<p><i>Matador</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Cartoon matador skeleton holding his own head and another feminine figure with child in womb; flowers and mountains</p> <p>Location: Central, off an engaged street, at an intersection, can see several other murals, on a business</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Narrow sidewalk, engaged area, busy intersection for pedestrians and vehicles</p> <p>Access: High visual and physical access</p>
<p><i>UNITED – Josef Martinez</i> (Name taken from text on the mural)</p> 		<p>Content: Portrait of Josef Martinez, Atlanta United soccer player, posed with open arms over the word “UNITED”</p> <p>Location: Central, on an engaged street, at an intersection, can see several other murals, on a Black-owned business</p> <p>Spatial Quality: narrow sidewalk with busy traffic, some trash, engaged area, busy intersection for pedestrians and vehicles</p> <p>Access: High visual and physical access, although there is a tree that blocks viewership from across the street</p>
<p><i>Brad Guzan</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Portrait of Brad Guzan, Atlanta United, soccer player, with associated catch phrase – “He’s big, he’s bald, and he’s a brick wall”</p> <p>Location: Central, on engaged street, at an intersection, can see several other murals, on Black-owned business</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Some trash, narrow sidewalk, next to old chain link fence, busy intersection for pedestrians and vehicles</p> <p>Access: High visual access to vehicular and pedestrian traffic; high physical access</p>
<p><i>158 Train</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Train engine with smoke that shows building number</p> <p>Location: Central, on engaged street, at an intersection, can see several other murals, residential door</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Street trees, pedestrian-friendly, busy intersection for pedestrians and vehicles</p> <p>Access: High visual access for pedestrians, as mural is set in doorframe so could be missed by passing vehicles; high physical access</p>

<p><i>Orange Flower</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Orange rose with colorful shapes around it Location: Central, off an engaged street, on a residential garage door Spatial Quality: On a garage door, sidewalk only on opposite street side, but pedestrian-friendly Access: High visual and physical access, but can be limited if the garage door is retracted</p>
<p><i>Pipes</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Blue pipes with some branching like vegetation and some hearts Location: Midground/ Central; in a residential parking alley, not on a public street Spatial Quality: No sidewalk, behind residential buildings so disengaged Access: In private area with “No Trespassing” signs, so limited visual and physical access, part of the mural is on a garage door, which can be retracted and limit viewing</p>
<p><i>Trolley</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Front of trolley and street sign/lamp naming Peachtree and Bourbon Streets, associated with Atlanta and New Orleans respectively Location: Midground, at intersection of two engaged streets, on a Black-owned business Spatial Quality: At entrance of local restaurant, painted within the old infrastructure framework of the renovated building, pedestrian-friendly Access: Since the mural is on the inside of the pillar, it might seem that the mural can only be engaged with if a patron of the restaurant</p>

<p><i>Utility Box 3 – African Women</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Shows three Black women on each street-visible side of the box, all women have Black/African fashion – two with shaven heads and painted faces, and one with flowers that form an afro.</p> <p>Location: Midground, at intersection of two engaged streets</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Despite being at an intersection for engaged streets, it was at a more industrialized corner with no buildings, so seems disengaged, pedestrian-friendly, close to the street</p> <p>Access: Very high visual and physical access</p>
<p><i>Utility Box 2 – Abstract Saxophone Player</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Geometrically abstract saxophone player with the text “atl”</p> <p>Location: Edge/Midground, at an intersection, separate from other murals, close to Mercedes-Benz Stadium</p> <p>Spatial Quality: street trees, and right next to mixed-used building, but other street corners are disengaged, close to the street</p> <p>Access: Very high visual and physical access</p>
<p><i>Kings Become Legends</i> (Name taken from text on the mural)</p> 		<p>Content: Hand hammering a golden spike – the last spike in the Atlanta railway and a tradition at Atlanta United’s soccer games; Atlanta United colors and logo; text “Kings Become Legends”</p> <p>Location: Edge, on a through street, on neighborhood’s eastside across the railroad, on a vacant office building</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Placed on side of tall vacant office building, some street trees, high vehicular traffic, but sidewalks are wide; lots of construction (turns out the building was to be renovated and the mural removed)</p> <p>Access: Very high visual and physical access</p>

<p><i>Beloved Community</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Long quote regarding beloved, diverse community from social activist bell hooks with large scribbled red heart</p> <p>Location: Edge, on a through street, on neighborhood's eastside across the railroad, on a vacant office building</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Placed on side of tall vacant office building, some street trees, high vehicular traffic, but sidewalks are wide; lots of construction (turns out the building was to be renovated and the mural removed)</p> <p>Access: Very high visual and physical access</p>
<p><i>Growing Community</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Many people of different race, age, ability, gender, and occupation carrying sprouting plants next to an agricultural field; geometric sky and human figure holding a light</p> <p>Location: Central, in a private parking lot that services an art gallery and residents, on a retaining wall</p> <p>Spatial Quality: There are other sculptures in the parking lot and adjacent grass field, but enclosed in a locked fence</p> <p>Access: Very limited visual and physical access due to fence and the only road leading to this parking lot is not an engaged street</p>
<p><i>Braves and Koi Fish</i> (Name provided by author)</p>  <p>(Source: Atlanta Street Art Map)</p>		<p>Content: A Native American man seemingly referring to the Atlanta Braves baseball team; orange koi fish with a pink lily flower</p> <p>Location: Central, in a private paid parking lot that is only open when adjacent small businesses are open, on a fence separating parking lots, can see other murals in the same parking lot</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Enclosed in locked fence; behind shops and residential buildings; no passing traffic</p> <p>Access: Visual and physical access not only very limited due to enclosure, but also because cars park right against the mural, blocking it.</p>

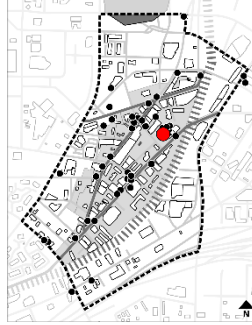
<p><i>Castleberry Market</i> (Name taken from the text on the mural)</p>  <p>(Source: Atlanta Street Art Map)</p>		<p>Content: Powerlines, sunset sky, and text “Castleberry Market”</p> <p>Location: Central; in a private paid parking lot that is only open when adjacent small businesses are open, on a fence separating parking lots, can see other murals in the same parking lot</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Enclosed in locked fence; behind shops and residential buildings; no passing traffic</p> <p>Access: Visual and physical access not only very limited due to enclosure, but also because cars park right against the mural, blocking it.</p>
<p><i>Hear No, Say No, See No</i> (Name provide by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Three men all wearing the American flag – one covering his ears, one covering his mouth, and one covering his eyes; surrounded by dates of traumatic events in recent global history</p> <p>Location: Central; in a private paid parking lot that is only open when adjacent small businesses are open, on a wall that separates a business parking lot from residential area, can see other murals in the same parking lot</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Enclosed in locked fence; behind shops and residential buildings; no passing traffic</p> <p>Access: Visual and physical access very limited due to enclosure</p>
<p><i>Atlanta Sports</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Downtown Atlanta skyline with all of Atlanta’s professional sport logos; text “ATL Finest”</p> <p>Location: Central; in a private paid parking lot that is only open when adjacent small businesses are open, on a structure behind small businesses, can see other murals in the same parking lot</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Enclosed in locked fence; behind shops and residential buildings; several yards away from the public street</p> <p>Access: Visual and physical access very limited due to enclosure</p>

Fox and Lanterns

(Name provided by author)



(Source: Atlanta Street Art Map)



Content: Leaping fox and four lanterns

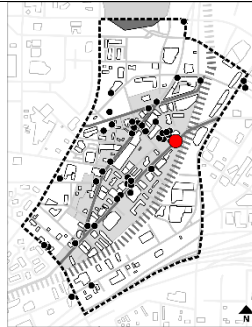
Location: Central; in a private paid parking lot that is only open when adjacent small businesses are open

Spatial Quality: Enclosed in locked fence; behind shops and residential buildings; several yards away from the public street, on a structure behind small businesses

Access: Visual and physical access not only very limited due to enclosure, but also because cars park right against the mural, blocking it.

Old Lady Gang

(Name taken from business name)



Content: Portraits of the three Black women who founded the restaurant, Old Lady Gang

Location: Midground, on an engaged street, on a Black-owned business

Spatial Quality: Busy street, but on-street parking gives some buffer to pedestrians; hard to view mural unless on the opposite side of the street, but there is only a sidewalk and no buildings on that side

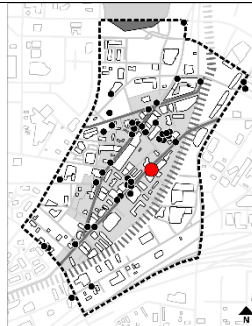
Access: High visual and physical access

Sea Turtle

(Name provided by author)



(Source: Atlanta Street Art Map)


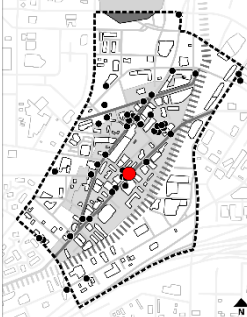

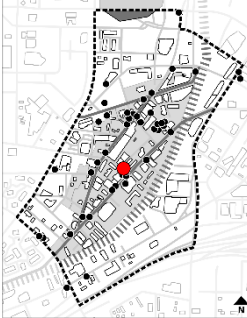

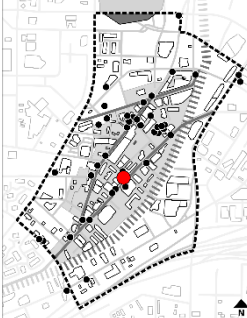


Content: Underwater with sea turtle and coral; Atlanta's downtown buildings and SkyView Ferris wheel, text "Smith Porter" (the name of the apartments)

Location: Central, on an engaged street, on a residential apartment building

Spatial Quality: Pedestrian-friendly, newer sidewalk since the apartments and right-of-way are newly constructed; this end of the street is less engaged with several vacant businesses

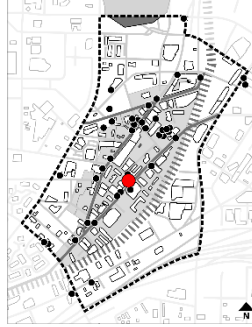
Access: High visual and physical access

<p><i>Black Woman with Flowers</i> (Name provided by author)</p>  <p>(Source: Atlanta Street Art Map)</p>		<p>Content: A Black woman wearing her hair up in a wrap surrounded by flowers, vibrant colors</p> <p>Location: Central, off an engaged street, at an intersection, on a seemingly private art studio, can see several other murals</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Some herbaceous plantings at the bottom of the mural, sidewalk only on the opposite side of the street, busy intersection for pedestrians and vehicles</p> <p>Access: High visual and physical access</p>
<p><i>Noodles</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Looks like intertwining, colorful noodles</p> <p>Location: Central, off an engaged street, at an intersection, on a garage door of a seemingly private art studio, can see several other murals</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Some vegetation growing on the sides, including on the wall, sidewalk only on the opposite side of the street, busy intersection for pedestrians and vehicles</p> <p>Access: High visual and physical access, but can be limited if the garage door is retracted</p>
<p><i>Black Woman with Laser Eyes</i> (Name provided by author)</p> 		<p>Content: Black woman with lights coming from her eyes that highlight a door, text "en lux in tenebris lucet" (Latin for "and the light shines in darkness" which is a Bible verse John 1:5), woman's natural hair becomes the clouds and her hand reaches down from the clouds to hold the door up above the waves of the water</p> <p>Location: Central, off an engaged street, at an intersection, on a Black-owned business facing the parking lot, can see several other murals</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Parking spaces are right up against the mural, some vegetation, but not blocking mural, busy intersection for pedestrians and vehicles</p> <p>Access: High visual and physical access, unless cars are parked immediately in front of the wall</p>

Utility Box 4 – It's Our Time Now
(Name taken from text on mural (not shown))



(Source: SoHe Solutions Instagram)



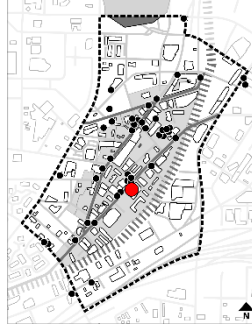
Content: One side shows a Black woman with wings, the other side has the text “It’s Our Time Now”

Location: Central, off an engaged street, at an intersection, can see several other murals

Spatial Quality: Under vegetation and surrounded by other murals, so an attractive space, busy intersection for pedestrians and vehicles

Access: High visual and physical access

Peters Street Train with Map
(Name provided by author)



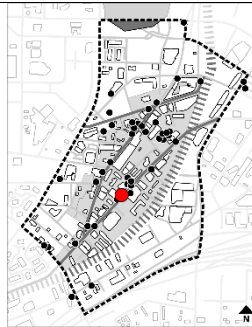
Content: Train engine, map of Castleberry Hill Streets, depiction of a street in the 1920/30s (can tell by type of car in painting), text of street names but “Peters Street” is enlarged, only uses blue and yellow colors

Location: Central, on an engaged street, at an intersection, can see several other murals

Spatial Quality: Small trees in front of it which gives some buffer from the street but also blocks full viewing, bright colors help it not get lost behind the vegetation, sidewalk

Access: Street trees block some visual access from the street, but it has good physical access

Everybody Love Everybody
(Name taken from text on mural)



Content: Large bubble text, “Everybody love everybody”, blue and pink text and some green background

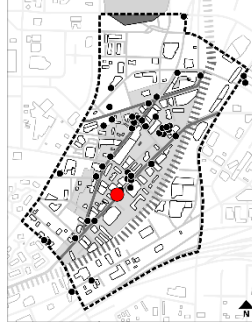
Location: Central, on an engaged street, can see some other murals, on a garage door

Spatial Quality: Sidewalk, street trees, midblock where there some vacant businesses so not as many pedestrians

Access: High visual and physical access, but can be limited if the garage door is retracted

Berries

(Name provided by author)



Content: Red berries and green leaves

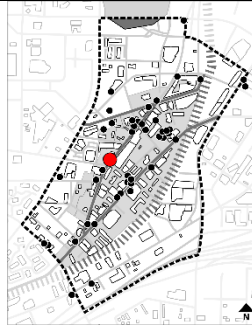
Location: Central, on an engaged street, can see some other murals, on the front of a restaurant that has been listed as temporarily closed through this study

Spatial Quality: Sidewalk, street trees, midblock where there some vacant businesses so not as many pedestrians

Access: Street trees block some visual access from the street and make the mural hard to notice due to dark colors, but it has good physical access

When They Go Low, We Go High

(Name taken from text on mural)



Content: Text “When they go low, we go high” with wings and the colors red, orange, green, and blue painted in the background

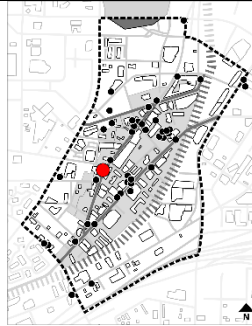
Location: Midground/Central, on an engaged street, at an intersection, on a Black-owned business

Spatial Quality: Parking in front so the mural can be blocked, busy intersection, street trees on the intersection corner so block view, but vibrant colors pop through

Access: Street trees block some visual access from the street, also parked cars can block visual and physical access

Comedy Hype

(Name taken from text on mural)



Content: Portraits of four Black comedians, Bernie Mac, Richard Pryor, Dick Gregory, and Redd Foxx; text “Comedy Hype”

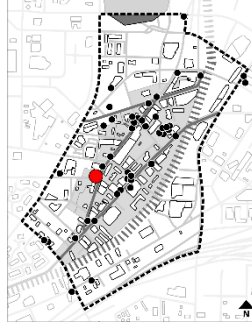
Location: Midground/Central, on an engaged street, on a garage door on a Black-owned business

Spatial Quality: Sidewalk, no street buffer (no trees or street parking)

Access: High visual and physical access, but can be limited if the garage door is retracted

Tiger and Pandas

(Name provided by author)



Content: A giant panda eating bamboo, a red panda, and a snarling tiger; text done in graffiti lettering that is hard to read for the author

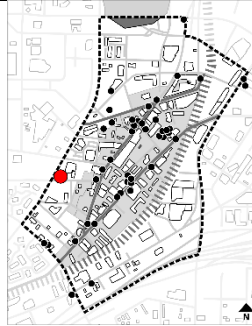
Location: Midground/Central, off an engaged street, on a freestanding wall that borders a business parking lot

Spatial Quality: Narrow sidewalk, shrubs and small trees that buffer, this stretch of street loses some building density making the mural feel disconnected

Access: Visual access is limited due to vegetation which makes it difficult to back up and view the mural in its entirety; high physical access

Jamaican Diaspora

(Name provided by author)



Content: Many people, all people of color, gathering to cook and eat; some people wearing traditional African attire, Jamaican flags and colors

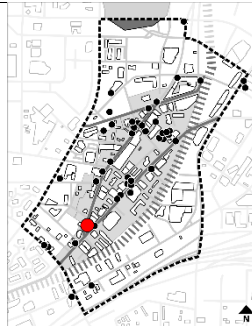
Location: Edge, on a through street, on a Black-owned restaurant

Spatial Quality: Every part of this building is painted with either people or the Jamaican colors, building sits on a block corner by itself so really stands out with murals, has sidewalks to building, but not much else surrounding the business to draw people there

Access: High visual and physical access

God is Love

(Name taken from text on mural)



Content: Black boy in a power pose in front of flowers and mustard yellow background; text "God is love"

Location: Midground, on an engaged street, at the fork that splits Peters and Walker Streets, on a building

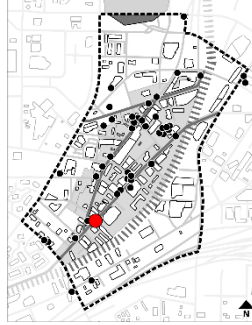
Spatial Quality: Very narrow sidewalk, but clear view from opposite the street, some posters around since this seems to be vacant building and people use some wall space for advertising

Access: High visual and physical access

Utility Box 5 – Cephalopod
(Name provided by author)



(Source: Arkrose Instagram)



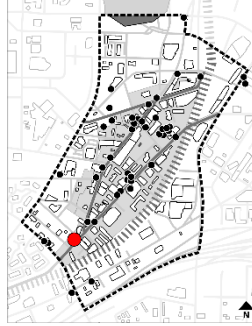
Content: Several-legged cephalopod embracing a city; both sides of the utility box are painted showing both sides of the cephalopod and the city

Location: Midground, on an engaged street

Spatial Quality: Street trees, busy intersection, pedestrian-friendly

Access: Hidden under street trees and behind parked cars so could have limited visual access from the street, but high physical access

Hey Brown Girl, You're Beautiful
(Name taken from text on mural)



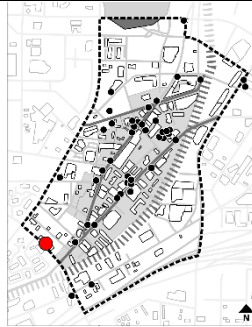
Content: Outline of a Black woman in a headaddress with text "Hey brown girl you're beautiful" and signed with "Black girl beautiful", background is colorful

Location: Midground, off an engaged street, on a Black-owned business

Spatial Quality: Narrow sidewalk, but this side street is not busy to vehicles, so people are able to stand on the street to view the mural

Access: High visual and physical access

Dogs
(Name provided by author)


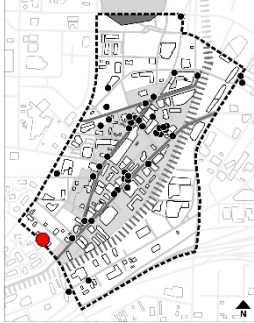

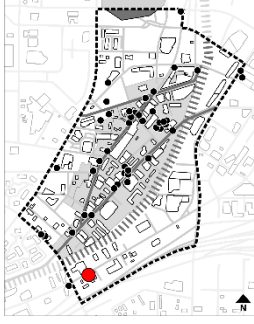

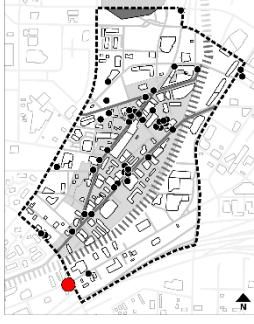


Content: Different breeds of dogs painted in vibrant colors; colorful

Location: Edge, off a through street, on a Black-owned business

Spatial Quality: Within a gated business parking lot, sidewalk; setback from street, so could be hard to see from passing vehicles

Access: Limited visual and physical access since behind locked fence and parked vehicles

<p><i>Mr. George</i> (Name taken from text on mural)</p> 		<p>Content: Portrait of Mr. George, the original business owner of the A&M Barbershop, text “Mr. George 1925-2018”</p> <p>Location: Edge, on a through street, on a Black-owned business</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Within a gated business parking lot, sidewalk; setback from street, so could be hard to see from passing vehicles</p> <p>Access: Limited visual and physical access since behind locked fence and parked vehicles</p>
<p><i>Kids Save Dogs, Dogs Save Kids</i> (Name taken from text on mural)</p> 		<p>Content: Black girl running with a dog and cat, both wearing a superhero capes; background is abstract and geometric, text “Kids save dogs, dogs save kids”</p> <p>Location: Edge, on a through street, on a non-profit building, on eastside of railroad track</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Sidewalk; non-profit vehicle sometimes is parked in front of mural, some other boards laying around with messages to be kind to animals</p> <p>Access: High visual access as long a no vehicle is parked in front; high physical access</p>
<p><i>Culture Makes Us Unique, Love Brings Us Together</i> (Name taken from text on mural)</p> 		<p>Content: Several young women of different races with different fashion styles; text “Culture Makes Us Unique and Love Brings Us Together”</p> <p>Location: Edge, on a through street, on a building with unknown status, at an intersection on eastside of railroad track</p> <p>Spatial Quality: Sidewalk, some taggings on the other side of the building, busy intersection for vehicles</p> <p>Access: High visual and physical access</p>