

Manning Avenue Free Studio
Re Defining Possibilities

Ivan T. Sanders, Director

February 23, 2022

Attn: The Honorable Kevin L. Johnson, SC State Senate District 36

From: Ivan T. Sanders, Executive Director and Beverly A. Montgomery, Chairperson – Board of Directors

Re: The Manning Avenue Free Studio Project (MAFS)

The Vision: The vision of The Manning Avenue Free Studio (MAFS) Art Project is to create an inclusive, safe haven for Artists, at risk Children, Youth and Adults to learn, value and create Art as a means to heal, inspire, challenge and build equity in the South Sumter Community and surrounding areas.

The Mission: The Manning Avenue Free Studio (MAFS) Art Project has a two-fold mission:

- To educate and build a lifelong appreciation for Art, Creativity and Craftsmanship.
- To provide person centered Art Programs, Job Training and Placement and Behavioral Health Support within a Cultural Center housing a legacy of work by renowned Artist/Sculptor, David “Pablo” Sanders.

The Concept: “Art and culture are essential for building a community, supporting development, nurturing health and well-being, and contributing to economic opportunity. Collectively, art and culture enable understanding of the past and envisioning of a shared, more equitable future. In disinvested communities, art and culture act as tools for community development, shaping infrastructure...and other core amenities. In communities of color and low-income communities, art and culture contribute to strengthening cultural identity, healing trauma, and fostering a shared vision for community.” (PolicyLink.org - a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity). Across the United States, growing movements are focusing on equitable development, and community-centered art and culture are uniting to strengthen the equity impact of their work. The Manning Avenue Free Studio (MAFS) in Sumter, South Carolina is aligned with this concept and designed program goals that will build a bridge between Art and Culture, Workforce Development and Behavioral Health Supports needed and required in a community whose growth has been stunted by poverty, crime, substance misuse, unemployment/under-employment and neglect.

241 Manning Avenue, Sumter South Carolina 29150 * Correspondence: PO Box 423, Dalzell South Carolina 29040

Voice: 803.464.8453 * Email: mafs766@yahoo.com * Website: www.manningfreestudio.org



Manning Avenue Free Studio
Re Defining Possibilities

Ivan T. Sanders, Director

Community Benefit: MAFS has a goal to reduce societal, familial and judicial risk factors, while increasing protective factors such as opportunities for personal growth, economic development and skilled employment training and placement. MAFS programming is designed to give its participants the foundational support needed to revitalize a disenfranchised community that, by no fault of their own, have not had full access, or the systematic support required to achieve success. By utilizing Best Practices established by successful Community Art Programs across the country with similar demographics, the Manning Avenue Free Studio Art Project recognizes that Art is a vehicle that can be used to engage Children, Youth and Adults in activities that will increase their self-esteem, deter crime, strengthen families and communities, foster self-awareness, manage behavior and substance misuse, increase opportunities for employment and better wages, and restore economic prosperity where the breakdown of poverty along racial lines is particularly striking. MAFS Program design, goals and benefits to the community include Art Classes and Programs for at risk children, youth and adults, Skilled Job Training/Job Development to prepare participants age 16-24 for opportunities to obtain competitive employment as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Behavioral Health Services to address psycho-social factors that present barriers to success.

Historic Significance: While researching models of community centered Art Programs that bridge Art and Culture, Workforce Development and Behavioral Health Supports with similar demographic and geographic makeup as South Sumter, and tracing GIS data provided by the local tax assessor's office, the Manning Avenue Free Studio Team identified that the intact Gallery edifice was built in or around 1950 and housed the first Black-owned shoe store in Sumter, which holds great significance in our community on a historical level. Further research revealed that 241 Manning Avenue, Sumter, SC is documented in a City of Sumter Historic Resources Survey through a grant from the National Park Service and administered by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History conducted in 2010 by Principal Investigator/Project Manager Mary B. Reed (deceased) and a team of Surveyors, Historians and Co-Authors affiliated with New South Associates of Stone Mountain, Georgia – a firm that provides cultural resource management services, archaeology, history, architectural history, historic preservation planning, public interpretation of heritage sites, and geophysical surveys.

241 Manning Avenue, Sumter South Carolina 29150 * Correspondence: PO Box 423, Dalzell South Carolina 29040

Voice: 803.464.8453 * Email: mafs766@yahoo.com * Website: www.manningfreestudio.org



MANNING AVENUE FREE STUDIO
Re Defining Possibilities

Manning Avenue Free Studio
Re Defining Possibilities

Ivan T. Sanders, Director

Per the Survey, “in order to organize the fieldwork for the dense project area, the city was divided into nine survey areas. Through discussions the team from SCDAH, the nine areas were prioritized by need and amount of previously recorded information. Since little information about the development and architectural makeup of the predominantly African American communities existed, these residential areas were given priority.” As a result of these discoveries, the Manning Avenue Free Studio Team reached out to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. The Gallery Building of the Manning Avenue Free Studio which remains intact yet in need of restoration, meets the criteria for the NRHP and we are planning to apply for the credentialing process to preserve this building as a historical landmark in the city/county of Sumter.

Our Needs: From an operational perspective, the Gallery Building is not sufficient in size, space or structure to meet the full vision and mission for MAFS. Our Team has met with officials from the city, county and Economic Development and engaged a Surveyor and Architect to discuss our needs, seek support and guidance on adding an additional structure to the Manning Avenue Free Studio property which will include a 5k square foot picturesque, multi-functional Creative Space that will house the MAFS Art Project, Job Training Program, Behavioral Health Support Services, Artists Safe Haven and the first Cultural Center located in the heart of an Opportunity Zone in South Sumter. The estimated funding needed for this project is \$1.5M. Please find attachments at the end of this memo to review the architectural designs and front elevations.

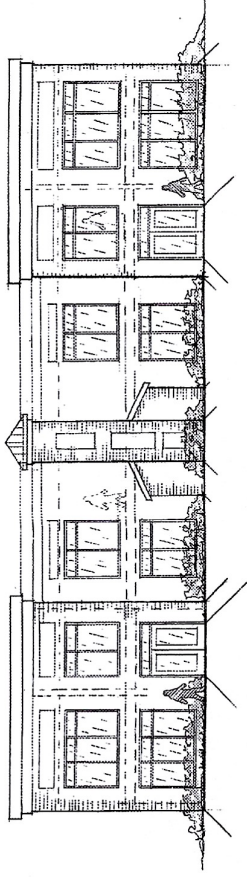
In Closing: As a leader in the South Carolina Senate and a Community Stakeholder, I know you understand the challenges organizations face each day. Our organization, the Manning Avenue Free Studio, a 501c3, non-profit organization is actively trying to create solutions and solve problems that our community is facing in South Sumter and the surrounding areas. But our efforts to restore our community, create jobs and uplift citizenry won't reach maximum effectiveness unless we have the support of concerned community leaders like you!

Thank you for your unwavering support.

241 Manning Avenue, Sumter South Carolina 29150 * Correspondence: PO Box 423, Dalzell South Carolina 29040

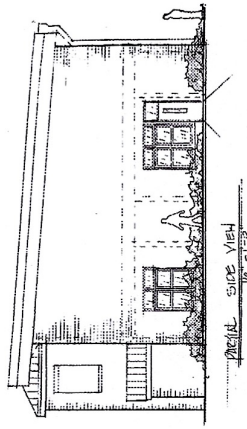
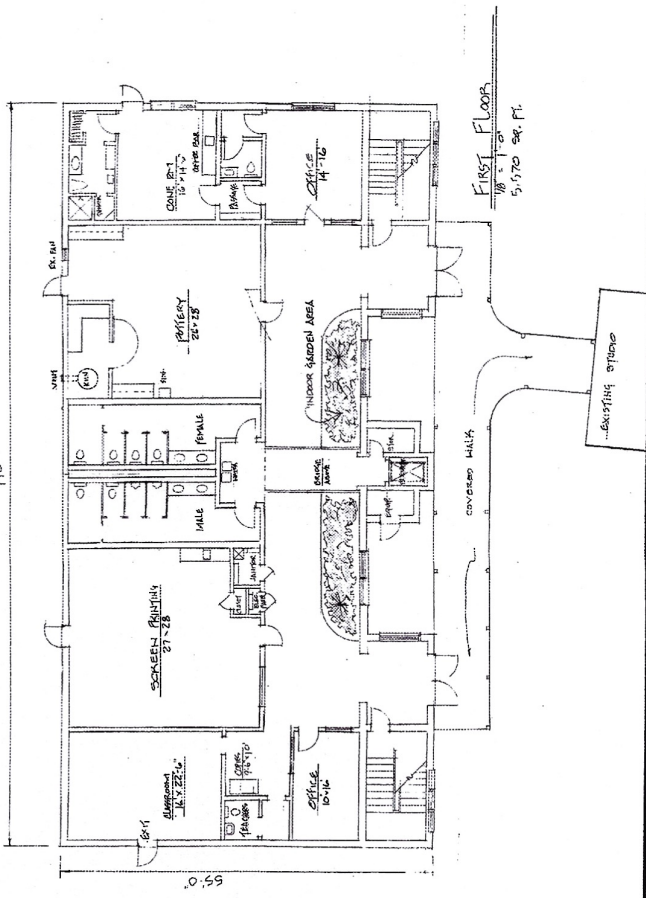
Voice: 803.464.8453 * Email: mafs766@yahoo.com * Website: www.manningfreestudio.org





FRONT ELEVATION - MANNING AVE.

FOR REVIEW ONLY



SIDE VIEW

