

# 165 COURT STREET MURAL

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING - JULY 2021

165 Court Street is located at the intersection of Fleet Street and Court Street just southwest of the Fire Station and across the street from the PHA – Margeson Apartments. The two-story building contains a mix of (4) retail and office spaces with associated signage for each business.

The owner of the building, Todd Adelman of KWA LLC, has been working with a local nonprofit group “Friends of Ruth Blay, Inc” to bring awareness to some of the many prominent women of Portsmouth’s storied history. The first of these women is Ruth Blay (1737-1768). Ruth, a 31-year-old teacher from South Hampton, was tried, convicted, and publicly hanged for concealing the body of her illegitimate baby. She was the last female executed in New Hampshire.

A mural is being proposed at the southwest wall of the 165 Court Street building. The mural will contain a unique artist’s rendering of Ruth Blay with associated title, historical facts, design credits, and a “History Through Art” tag intended to identify and link together this installation with other future murals focused on a variety of Portsmouth women.



**Ruth Blay Mural**

Photographic Vinyl  
163 Court Street: West Wall



165 COURT STREET  
PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801

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165 COURT STREET MURAL

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COVER

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4 Market Street  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

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McHA: RD / JJ

Scale: NOT TO SCALE





VIEW FROM FIRE STATION



VIEW FROM COURT STREET FROM THE SOUTHWEST



MURAL WALL - SOUTHWEST WALL



MURAL WALL - SOUTHWEST WALL

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# 165 COURT STREET MURAL

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# EXISTING PHOTOGRAPHS

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# Ruth Blay Mural

Photographic Vinyl  
163 Court Street: West Wall

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MURAL RENDERING

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# Ruth Blay Mural Text

**Project Tag: History Through Art**

**Mural Title: Remembering Ruth Blay, 1737-1768**

Teacher; Seamstress; Unwed Mother

## History

In 1768, Ruth Blay, a 31-year-old teacher from South Hampton, was tried, convicted, and publicly hanged for concealing the body of her illegitimate baby.

Concealment was punishable by death by hanging, unless the woman could prove the baby was stillborn. In Blay's final words, written on the eve of her execution, she maintained the child was stillborn, which she could have proven had she been properly advised by her lawyer.

She, and other women before her, were victims of their gender, class, social status, the mores of the time and harsh provincial law.

The last woman executed in New Hampshire, Ruth Blay's body lies buried in an unmarked grave in what is now South Street Cemetery.

- Carolyn Marvin, Historian  
Author of Hanging Ruth Blay, an Eighteenth Century Tragedy, The History Press, 2010

*Sketch for Ruth Blay Mural*

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SKETCH AND TEXT

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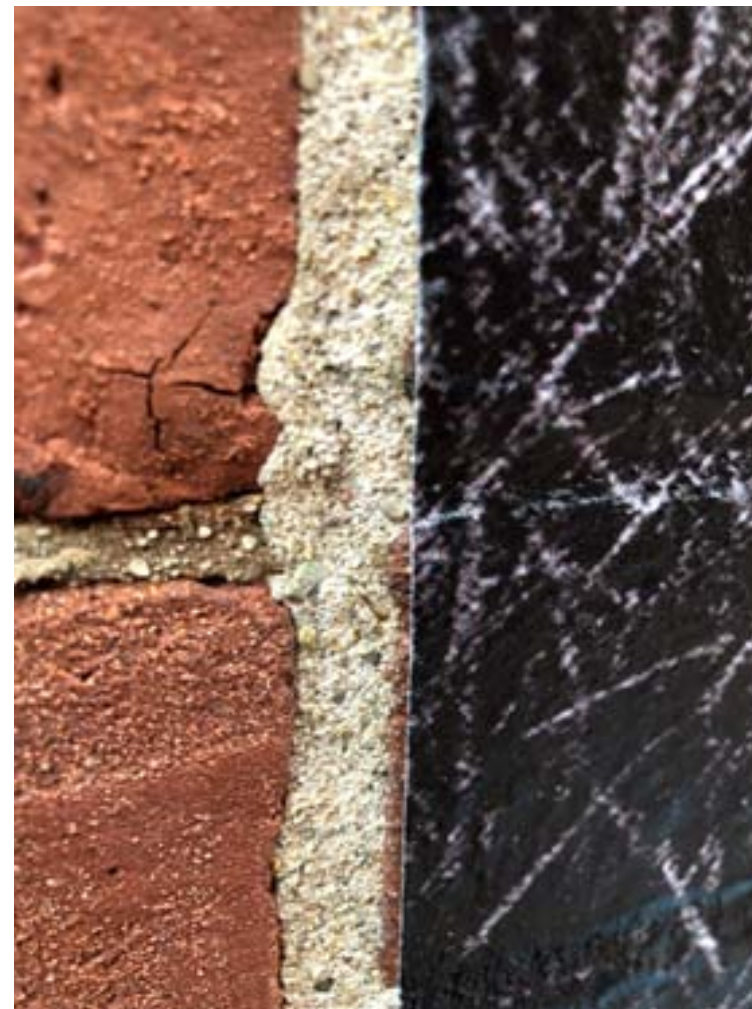
# Materials

The existing grey painted wall at the southwest of the building will act as a subdued background color for the mural renderings and text.

The entirety of the mural itself (rendering, title, text, etc.) will be printed on an adhesive vinyl material similar to a few comparable murals in the downtown area.



MURALS ON COMMERCIAL ALLEY WITH SIMILAR MATERIAL



EDGE OF VINYL AT BRICK MORTAR JOINT



PROFILE OF BRICK AND MORTAR JOINTS VIEWED THROUGH VINYL MATERIAL

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MATERIALS

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