



**Design Review Board (DRB)
Staff Report**

Exterior Renovation

Case # 19-92: 358 Walnut St.
Memphis, TN 38126

Applicant/Owner: Yvonne Bobo
OFF THE WALLS
358 Walnut St.
Memphis, TN 38126

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a \$47,359 South City Good Neighbor Grant at the July 17, 2019 CCDC Board Meeting.

The subject property is located on the east side of Walnut St., in the block between Vance Ave. and St. Paul Ave. The site contains a 26,000 square feet two-story industrial building with a surface parking lot to the north. The owner, Yvonne Bobo, has recently purchased the building to house her studio, a collective of 15 artists and the non-profit OFF THE WALLS.

OFF THE WALLS is a non-profit that provides equitable access to art experiences for at risk youth, youth and adults. OFF THE WALLS impacts the community in two ways: through partnering and collaborating with local nonprofits to deliver workshops for the community to experience immersive arts, and by providing a Community Events Space, shared resources and financial opportunities to local artists.

With the renovation of 358 Walnut St. into artist studios and shared creative space, artists will be able to prosper through community and collaborative arts, shared resources, a safe work space and a community art event space.

This application includes plans for the exterior renovation. The applicant will return with a separate application for signage.

Project Description: The applicant has already completed \$85,000 in interior renovations and some permanent building improvements including 7 renovated

bathrooms, updated electrical, new windows, new doors, security system, lighting and fencing.

The proposed scope of work for DRB Review would include the following:

- Sidewalk repair
- ADA accessible ramp
- Parking lot improvements
- Exterior painting
- Public Art
- Signage

Staff Report:

The proposed exterior renovation is consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and DMC priorities of promoting creativity and enhancing the public realm.

Staff believes the proposed scope of work will enhance the pedestrian experience along Walnut St., bring more activity to one of the gateways to the neighborhood and allow the exterior of the building to match its artistic interior use.

As a building which will include artist studios, the exterior painting and public art is an opportunity to creatively identify the building and reimagine the building's present condition.

Due to the size of the parking lot, the proposed improvements will be highly visible and transformative both in utility and curb appeal. Allowing the parking lot to second as an opportunity for landscaping also increases the lot's visual interest.

With the sidewalk repair, public art and previously installed lighting, the pedestrian experience is also improved increasing walkability in South City both day and night.

Staff believes the proposed renovation is creative approach to reimagining an industrial building in South City and serves as a positive direction of design in the neighborhood.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval with the condition that the applicant return with a separate application for signage.