



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

Public Art & Architectural Lighting

Case # 18-40R1: 999 S Cooper St
Memphis, TN 38104

Applicant/Owner: Marion Threatt
Focal Point Investments, LLC
8950 MidSouth Drive
Olive Branch, MS 38654

Background: On April 11, 2018 the Design Review Board (DRB) of the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) approved the application for new construction at the above referenced location with the condition that enhanced architectural lighting, public art and signage be submitted for DRB review as a separate application.

Signage will be submitted with a later application.

Project Description: 999 S Cooper is a new residential building, built on a vacant lot along Cooper Street near Walker Avenue in Midtown Memphis. The building features 25 studio apartments, each with 550 square feet of space. The portion of the building facing Cooper includes nine apartments on three floors, while the remaining 16 apartments occupy four floors behind the Cooper-facing portion. The three ground-floor apartments facing Cooper are configured as flexible spaces that can be used for retail, office, or live-work space. Each unit features modern open floor plans and most of the units have 10-foot loft ceilings.

Staff Report: This application is reviewing the proposed public art and enhanced architectural lighting:

Public Art:

The proposed public art is a statue of Johnny Cash that will be located in the landscape strip between the sidewalk and the street. The statue is 6 ft. (h) and will be surrounded by sponsor pavers north and south of its footing with a total footprint of 18 ft. x 6 ft.

The applicant partnered with Legacy Memphis to include the statue the non-profit funded on the 999 S Cooper site (adjacent to Galloway United Methodist Church) while the applicant is providing engineering, land, foundation, and lighting.

The statue will be lit with in grade color LED uplights that create a “ring of fire” around the statue and highlight the statue at night.

Architectural Lighting:

The approach to enhanced architectural lighting has two components, both found on the eastern elevation facing Cooper St.

Ten (10) accent light fixtures will uplight the space between each window. These fixtures highlight the brick façade with the intent to nearly light the full height of the building.

Four (4) gas flame lamps are located between the entrances to the three units with individual entrances on Cooper. These oversized gas lamp lanterns light the sidewalk to provide both functional and decorative lighting.

Staff Report:

In order to receive an additional year in a project’s PILOT, the applicant may include public art. The DRB reviews applications for public art to ensure each proposal is consistent with the DMC’s public art goals to create highly visible, permanent, impactful public art that elevates the appearance of the property as a whole.

Staff believes that the proposed public art is both a tasteful addition to the entrance of the property, as well as an appropriate solution to the community’s desire to place a Johnny Cash statue in the Cooper Young Neighborhood (in proximity to Galloway United Methodist Church). Therefore, the statue and its additional lighting and streetscaping features not only highlight Cash’s history at the proposed location, but also serve to create an interesting and unique public art piece. Staff agrees that this proposal is consistent with the DMC’s guidelines for public art.

In order to receive an additional year in a project’s PILOT, the applicant may also include enhanced architectural lighting. The DRB reviews applications for architectural lighting to ensure that each proposal goes above and beyond a functional exterior lighting or minimal architectural lighting approach.

Although the proposed lighting sufficiently illuminates the building’s façade, staff believes the two components as proposed are not impactful enough to be considered enhanced architectural

lighting. When earning an extra year of the PILOT, staff looks for proposals that use light design to effectively activate the building façade at night and exceed exterior lighting expectations. With this consideration, staff recommends the board determine if this is an appropriate approach for architectural lighting.

Staff Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval of the public art as proposed with the condition that the board determine the appropriateness of the enhanced architectural lighting proposal.**