



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

New Construction & Exterior Renovation

Case # 19-147: Loews Hotel
128 Adams Ave.
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant: Tim McCullough
5101 Wheelis Drive
Memphis, TN 38117

Owner: Loews Hotel
667 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 38117

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a 30-Year PILOT at the November 19, 2019 CCRFC Board Meeting.

The subject property consists of a parcel on the east side of Main Street, commonly referred to as the Civic Center Plaza, and in the block between the Convention Center and Adams Avenue. The applicant also plans to renovate a portion of the existing adjacent building at 128 Adams Ave. (Old Police HQ) as a part of the hotel. The overall site is approximately 2.75 acres.

Project Description: The Memphis Loews Hotel will be the new construction of a 500 key, 16 story modern glass tower. The hotel will include a lobby and restaurant with entrances on Main St. (400 feet from the Cannon Center entrance), porte-cochere and include service entrances on Second St. The project will include two ball rooms, meeting rooms, food and beverage services for three meals daily, and recreational amenities. A rooftop pool deck will occur at the fourth floor with views to the Mississippi River. A total area of the project is approximately 540,000 ft.²

The main entrance and lobby will be positioned directly off a newly activated main street with two-way traffic reinstated from Adams Street to Poplar Avenue. The western facade along Main Street will be constructed primarily of glass allowing for street-level transparency.

The location of the porte-cochere will replace the sunken portion of Civic Center Plaza that is located just south of the entrance to the hotel lobby and will be partially covered.

The old police building, located at 128 Adams, will also be included in the project and has been assessed for renovation and inclusion into the overall project.

The proposed renovation of the building is in response to a number of structural irregularities which have occurred in the five-story 1959 addition located at the northern section of the building. Partly due to serious neglect, this portion of the facility has been deemed structurally unsound and will therefore be demolished to make way for the hotel parking garage.

A portion of the original 1911 Greek Revival structure will be preserved with considerable stabilization of this facility that has suffered abandonment for over 38 years. Although the use of this building has not yet been determined, it will be used either as a function of the hotel or an independent opportunity for a future tenant.

In addition to all new windows, a new roof and a new demising wall, additional upgrades include HVAC and the restoration/stabilization of the remaining interior details.

The applicant will return with a separate application for the exterior lighting and signage.

Staff Report:

The proposed new construction and renovation is consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and DMC priorities of designing with authenticity and improving the pedestrian experience.

Staff believes the proposed project is consistent with these priorities and improves the Main St. and Second St. pedestrian experience. The lobby and restaurant maximize their frontage along Main St. and aim to activate the plaza while prioritizing transparency.

Staff believes the new construction of a 16-floor modern tower will be a welcome style in the neighborhood and proudly a product of its own time. The building materials will primarily be prefinished MICA fluoropolymer window wall vision glass (Main St. and the tower) with precast stone on the basement/ground floor and EIFS on the second and third floors along the north and east elevations.

The renovation of the Old Police Headquarters will prioritize retaining the frontage of the on Adams Ave. The 1959 addition will be demolished and a portion of the 1911 building will be preserved.

The Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and Principles encourages historic preservation when possible especially with significant structures. Staff considers preserving the Old Police HQ a priority and is supportive of keeping the entrance on Adams Ave.

Collectively, the proposed project will serve as a significant addition to the Downtown Core and Civic Center.

Staff Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval with the condition that the applicant return with a separate application for exterior lighting and signage.**