



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

Exterior Improvements

Case # 19-35: Mollie Fontaine Lounge
679 Adams Ave.
Memphis, TN 38105

Applicant/Owner: Karen Carrier
Mollie Fontaine Lounge
679 Adams Ave.
Memphis, TN 38105

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a \$60,000 Exterior Improvement Grant at the March 20, 2019 CCDC Board Meeting.

The subject property is a circa 1886 2-story townhouse in the Eclectic Revival Style. This historic property is located within the Victorian Village neighborhood and is listed as a contributing structure on the National Register of Historic Places.

The current owner, Karen Carrier, first opened a fine dining restaurant in the space in 1995. After about ten years, Ms. Carrier converted the space into the Mollie Fontaine Lounge. The applicant received CCDC approval of an Exterior Improvement Grant (EIG) to make exterior building improvements in support of the continued operation of the Mollie Fontaine Lounge.

Project Description: The grant will be used to create an enhanced outdoor patio space at the front of the property and make additional improvements to the exterior. This work will include new paver curb strips, sidewalk replacement, a new retaining wall, new courtyard pavers, exterior lighting (façade lighting, landscape lighting, and pole & fence lighting) and additional landscaping will all be prominently visible at the front of the property.

Façade repairs include replacing windows on the east elevation, restoring the north-facing front windows, roof repair and replacement, and repairing ornamental and fascia trim. Exterior painting and brick tuck-pointing is also planned. The scope also includes ornamental metal work for the front rails and a new ADA access rail. The historic iron fence along the front of the property will also be restored by the Ornamental Metal Museum.

Staff Report:

The property is a contributing structure as part of the Victorian Village National Register Historic District. The proposed renovation is consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and DMC priorities of designing with consistency and designing to fit within the context.

The proposed improvements for Mollie Fontaine's looks to retain the character of the building while enhancing the curb appeal of the property. The sidewalk repair, paver curb strips and new retaining wall will serve as improvements that will enhance the pedestrian experience. The new outdoor patio space, which will be created with new brick pavers and landscaping will create a space where customers can sit outside and further activate the street. All of the chosen components that create this space maintain the character of Mollie Fontaine's and extend the vibrancy of the business.

The ornamental metal museum will work to create a new front rail for the entrance of the property as well as restore the existing iron fence, allowing the character of the home to be retained in both pieces. The same aesthetic will be used with the light fixture installed in front of the building with a Victorian street light pole.

Collectively, the proposed scope of work is consistent with the home's history as well as the historic preservation of Victorian Village. From high-quality improvements to the building to tasteful additions to the site, staff believes the proposed renovation will be a strong enhancement to Adams Ave.

Staff Recommendation:

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