



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

Exterior Renovation

Case # 19-34: NAACP  
588 Vance Ave.  
Memphis, TN 38126

Applicant/Owner: Ms. Vickie Terry  
NAACP  
588 Vance Ave.  
Memphis, TN 38126

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a \$50,000 South City Good Neighbor Grant at the March 20, 2019 CCDC Board Meeting.

The subject property is located on the north side of Vance Ave., in the block between S Lauderdale and Cynthia Pl. The site contains a 5,360 square feet two-story brick building with a surface parking lot to the east. Built in 1956, NAACP has occupied the space since the 1970s as it has been a center of activism, especially during the Civil Rights Movement. The site is also located along the Memphis Heritage Trail, a trail of local attractions throughout Downtown and South City where there has been significant African American contribution to the City of Memphis. As one of the oldest and largest branches in the NAACP organization, the Memphis chapter was founded in 1909, recently celebrating 100 years in Memphis.

Project Description: The applicant is planning a full interior and exterior renovation for NAACP. This renovation will primarily consist of a new aluminum storefront system, painting the exterior, adding landscaping, signage, exterior lighting and parking lot improvements.

The Southern elevation which serves as the primary entrance of the building will be enhanced with a new storefront system which will begin just east of the entrance and wrap around to the eastern elevation. The new storefront system will be wrapped in an existing overhang, which will be repainted black and serve as an architectural feature for the front of the building. Recessed lighting will be installed above the storefront system. Beneath the new storefront system, shrubs will be planted in 2 ft. tall planter boxes. The brick within this feature will be painted dark grey. The vertical brick component just west of the front door will be painted dark grey as

well, and will be further accented with a painted fiber cement panel which will serve as the base for signage. The remainder of the building will be painted a light grey.

The parking lot east of the building will be entirely repaved and restriped to include 11 parking spots. The existing brick retaining wall will be painted to match the exterior of the building. Additional site improvements include grass to fill in what is presently asphalt in front of the building and between the building and the parking lot.

The signage will be aluminum letters directly applied to the panel on both sides of the panel and illuminated with uplights making it visible from both directions of Vance. The details of signage will be submitted with a separate application.

**Staff Report:**

The proposed renovation is consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and DMC priorities of honoring the heritage of the city and enhancing the pedestrian experience.

The proposed renovation of NAACP looks to honor the architecture of the building with a tasteful renovation that includes more contemporary features. The reimagining of the metal overhang as a defining corner feature, dramatically enhances the curb appeal and adds character to the building. New storefront systems, landscaping, exterior lighting, and exterior paint create a new aesthetic and allow minimal modifications to tastefully renovate the exterior.

Similarly, the existing brick vertical component will be enhanced with the fiber cement panel which will include the signage for the building and appropriately and creatively identify the building.

The proposed landscaping for the site, which is presently primarily asphalt, will transform the property. The addition of softscaping in addition to repaving and restriping the parking lot will be consistent with the quality of the exterior renovation. These site improvements and the building's exterior lighting will improve the pedestrian experience along Vance Ave.

Staff is supportive of the proposed design and believes that it appropriately maintains the character and history of the building, while introducing a contemporary aesthetic that prioritizes transparency and high-quality design to reimagine this anchor of the South City neighborhood.

**Staff Recommendation:**

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