



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

Exterior Renovation & New Construction

Case # 19-133:

245 S Front St.  
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant:

HBG Design  
One Commerce Square  
40 S Main St. Suite 2300  
Memphis, TN 38103

Owner:

Carlisle Development Co., LLC  
263 Wagner Place  
Memphis, Tennessee 38103

Background:

DRB review is required for this project because it received a 20-year PILOT lease for new construction and renovation on the One Beale site, which comprises 5.5 acres generally bound by Beale Street to the north, Front Street to the east, Pontotoc Avenue to the south, and the railroad line to the west.

Of the various components of the One Beale project, Phase I consisted of The Landing at One Beale (apartments) and Hyatt Centric (Hotel on Beale St.), which have already been reviewed by the DRB.

**The Landing at One Beale**

On August 1, 2018 and December 5, 2018 the DRB reviewed and approved applications for the Landing at One Beale. With their secondary approval, the only conditions were that the applicant return with a separate application for public art and signage.

**Hyatt Centric**

On September 5, 2018 and January 9, 2019 the DRB reviewed and approved applications for Hyatt Centric. With their secondary approval, the only conditions were that the applicant return with a separate application for public art and signage.

**The application before the DRB Board is for Phase II, the new construction & exterior renovation of the Ellis building located at the address listed above into a 120+ room boutique hotel.**

Project Description:

The newly proposed hotel is located along Front St. between Beale St. and Dr. MLK Jr. Ave. and south of the Hyatt Centric. The entrance to the lobby and courtyard will be on Front St. with a motor court access from Dr. MLK Jr. Ave. and a separate entrance at the west elevation.

The proposed design incorporates the existing Ellis Building façade, as well as the masonry party walls on the north and south building extents. The intent is to incorporate the frontage along Front St. in order to retain the character of the Ellis buildings, while also building a new contemporary 9-story tower that will be set back from Front St.

The approximately 105 feet of existing brick and cast-iron façade will be preserved and stabilized; existing doors will be refurbished or replaced with historically appropriate new construction.

The set back of approximately 17 ft. will create a courtyard space that embraces the character of the Ellis façade and creates a unique green buffer from Front St. for the first two floors of the hotel's lobby and meeting rooms.

The tower will be all brick with a textured brick design at each window. The windows on the west and east elevation maintain a more traditional grid. The windows on the north and south elevation have two central columns of windows.

West of the building and surrounding the cul-de-sac motor court, there will be a pedestrian plaza and outdoor terrace, which will serve as an additional amenity space and a landscaped connector for the additional Ellis buildings and uses. At the north end of the courtyard area, a small service yard would be masked by fencing and/or plant materials. Between the service yard and motor court would be landscaped for guest arrival and gathering. West of the motor court and sloping down to Wagner would be terraced landscaping, additional seating & gathering areas, and pedestrian pathways towards the river.

The remaining Ellis buildings – the Welding Shop at the corner of Front and MLK, and the Pattern Storage building at the corner of Wagner and MLK – are in the conceptual planning stage. Tentatively, the Welding Shop is conceptualized as an open market with food & beverage and/or retail.

The applicant will return with a separate application for enhanced architectural lighting, a complete landscaping plan and signage.

**Staff Report:**

The proposed renovation and new construction are consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and DMC priorities of designing with authenticity and honoring the heritage of the city.

The proposed design combines the historic façade of the Ellis Building with the construction of a new tower to be set back from Front St. This approach allows for a unique design that retains the historic character of the Ellis Building while also introducing contemporary design to the project. Similar to the approach Hyatt Centric took when utilizing some of the Ellis buildings as meeting space, staff believes it is a successful example of blending historic and modern architecture.

The courtyard serves as a unique opportunity to embrace the Ellis building's character, while introducing a greenspace that is beneficial to the hotel as well as pedestrians on Front St.

The proposed tower seems to be an appropriate direction for contemporary design in the neighborhood. However, staff would be supportive of additional windows or textured brick details being added to the north and south elevation to be more responsive to the fenestration patterns of the neighborhood.

Otherwise, staff believes the proposed design is proudly a product of its own time, while creatively incorporating the Ellis façade. Staff is supportive of the proposed design and feels that it is an appropriate direction for preserving the architectural significance of the Ellis Building.

Enhanced architectural lighting will be included in a separate application with signage, but both are envisioned to help further unify the buildings and enhance walkability at night while also further extending the vibrancy of One Beale along Front St.

**Staff Recommendation:**

**Staff recommends approval with the condition that the applicant return with a separate application for enhanced architectural lighting, landscaping and signage.**