



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

Exterior Renovation

Case # 20-14: 400 S. Main
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant / Owner: Kenneth Lipschutz
24 Washington Square North
New York, NY 10011

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a 15-year PILOT at the January 14, 2020 CCRFC meeting.

The subject property is a 2-story building at the northeast corner of S. Main Street and Huling Avenue. The building contains 30,600 sq. ft. of interior space, and was most recently used as a private residence.

The applicant is planning a complete renovation of the property into an active commercial use. The renovation will include converting the ground floor into three new commercial / retail bays with a total of 3,500 sq. ft. of leasable space. The rest of the space will be used to create 18 apartment units, which the owner plans to lease as short-term rental units.

Project Description: The existing storefront windows and doors on the building's Main Street façade will be replaced with new aluminum and glass storefront systems. The façade is divided into three bays – a south bay, a central bay, and a north bay – by existing pilasters. The north and south bays will feature double doors in the center of the bays. The middle bay is designed to be combined with the south bay if needed by a larger tenant, and will not initially have its own door (although one could be added). Permanent planters and accessible entrance ramps will be added to the Main Street façade as well.

On the south side of the building, a new ADA-compliant ramp and stair will be added, as well as a new recessed entry door that will serve as an entrance to the residential portion of the building. Brick on the south side of the building will be cleaned and tuck-pointed as needed, but existing ghost signs will be preserved whenever possible.

The only significant change to the building's existing fenestration will occur on the north side, which faces a walled-off courtyard. Sixteen new windows – eight on the first floor, and eight on the second -- will be installed on the north side to provide natural light for the apartment units. Four of the windows on the first floor will be located in the place of existing openings, while the rest will be new openings. Two new exterior stairs, leading to three new exterior doors, will also be added to the north side to service the apartments.

The east side of the building will be substantially unchanged, other than possible gutter and downspout repairs, and a new gate for the courtyard. A new mural is also being considered on the east side to meet the public art component outlined in the PILOT application, although the exact approach has not been selected, and is not being reviewed as a part of this current application.

Staff Report:

In the view of DRB staff, the proposed building alterations to 400 S. Main are consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines' recommendations for the preservation and reuse of historic buildings.

The character defining features and details on the Main Street façade are substantially unchanged, including the terra cotta window surrounds on the second story, the prominent cornice, and masonry quoins. The new storefront systems on this façade will maintain the classic division of bulkhead, display windows, and transom. The addition of ADA-accessible ramps is clearly an appropriate alteration of the building's exterior, in order to comply with modern requirements. Although new window openings will be added on the north side (which originally abutted a neighboring building), the changes to this secondary elevation in no way diminishes the building's essential character.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval, with the condition of additional approval for signage, public art, and architectural lighting at a later date.