



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

Exterior Renovation

Case # 19-106: 123 Court Ave.  
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant: Mr. Samuel Aroutiounian  
1121 Abbot Kinney Blvd.  
Venice, CA 90291

Property Owner: Ms. Anna Petrosyan  
4827 Azucena Rd.  
Woodland Hills, CA 91364

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a \$31,981 Exterior Improvement Grant at the August 21, 2019 CCDC Board Meeting.

The subject property is the ground-floor of a circa 1913 six-story building located on the south side of Court Square Park. While the majority of the building serves as residential condominium units, the ground-floor commercial space (approximately 2,051 sq. ft.) is a long-vacant property in the heart of the Downtown Core.

The applicant proposes a full renovation of the ground-floor for use as a coffee shop. The rear of the space will house Court Square Recordings, a new record label and recording studio that will be affiliated with the coffee shop.

The applicant received an Exterior Improvement Grant (EIG) to assist with new storefront windows and doors, exterior signage, lighting, and outdoor café seating. Construction is scheduled to begin in September and be completed by the end of 2019.

This application includes plans for the exterior renovation and signage.

Project Description: The proposed scope of work includes:

- New overhead doors (2) on the north elevation
- New door on north elevation that creates a direct entrance from the street to the coffee shop

- Bronze counters located at the windows to provide outdoor seating that will have bar stools
- New windows (4) to replace existing broken windows on the south elevation
- Small deck to create a small outdoor space
- Planters on the south elevation
- Exterior lighting
- Signage

**Signage:**

- One (1) wall sign to read “Court Square Recordings” and measure 21 ft. 3 in. (w) x 2 ft. 3 in. (h). The sign will be white neon tube with no backing and be located above the main entrance to the Recording Studio.

**Staff Report:**

The proposed exterior renovation is consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and DMC priorities of improving the pedestrian experience and enhancing the public realm.

This proposed design will put a vacant ground-floor commercial space back into productive use and bring more vibrancy to Court Square Park. The proposed scope of work enhances pedestrian access by adding a door directly to the business from the street. The new storefront system also enhances the ability for the business to open up to the sidewalk and animate Court Square Park.

The improvements on the south elevation will significantly enhance a neglected section of the back of the buildings. It will include more aesthetically pleasing elements including new windows, deck material, planters, lighting and outdoor seating. These improvements work to strengthen the appearance of this visible section of the building, but also increase use and access to the space.

The proposed signage is compliant with the CBID Sign Code.

Staff believes the proposed improvements work to adapt the building for a commercial use, enhance the pedestrian experience around Court Square Park, and introduce an improved use and aesthetic to the property.

**Staff Recommendation:**

**Staff recommends approval.**