



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

New Construction

- Case # 18-111: 1619 Monroe Ave.
Memphis, TN 38104
- Applicant/Owner: Amin Zaki
1619 Monroe LLC
7842 Farmington Blvd
Germantown, TN 38138
- Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a 9-Year PILOT at the September 11, 2018 CCRFC Board Meeting as a 10-unit apartment development in Midtown.
- Project Description: The proposed project is an apartment development composed of ten townhouse-style units. The development site is a currently vacant lot (.54 acres) on Monroe Avenue, between Avalon and Belvedere.
- Each of the ten units will have two bedrooms and approximately 1,200 square feet of living space, spread out across two stories. The units will be split between two mirrored buildings, with a landscaped interior courtyard in between. Twenty-four parking spaces will be wrapped behind the building, accessible via a drive that fronts on Monroe.
- The buildings will primarily use dark brick with the addition of limestone, aluminum framed awnings, ornamental fencing, vinyl single-hung windows, metal clad doors and accent siding.
- Public art, signage and enhanced architectural lighting will also be addressed in a separate DRB application. Their approach to exterior lighting will include extensive approaches to both the courtyard and the façade on Monroe Ave. with plans to incorporate lighting with signage and public art as well. The public art component will likely include a kinetic sculpture or mural along the Monroe façade with colored, upward lit LED lights.

Staff Report:

The proposed exteriors are consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and DMC priorities of designing to fit with the context and enhancing the pedestrian experience.

The proposed development will create 10 new apartment units on a currently unproductive and vacant site in a residential neighborhood. The layout of the site maintains the urban edge along Monroe Ave. with a gated entrance to the courtyard. The front door of each unit is oriented towards the courtyard, a layout consistent with apartment buildings in Midtown, while also allowing more open yet private entrances. The courtyard will be accessible from Monroe as well as the parking lot, located behind the apartment buildings and not visible from the street.

Although the two buildings that comprise the development face the courtyard, the façade along Monroe Ave. will also include windows to provide eyes on the street. The Monroe Ave. façade will also include extensive landscaping, exterior lighting, and public art which all serve to increase the pedestrian experience and create a dominant presence on Monroe Ave.

The development is appropriately scaled for the street, which features several existing apartment buildings of a similar density, including the Marilyn at 1639 Monroe, which the applicant previously renovated. Therefore, the primarily brick building is an appropriate style and scale designed to fit within the context of addition apartment buildings in the neighborhood. The small scale development is a high-quality step forward for increasing density in midtown and consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines and DMC priorities.

Staff Recommendation:

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