



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

Exterior Renovation

Case # 19-131: 61 Keel Ave.
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant: Maggie Lloyd
OJT
1336 Magazine St.
New Orleans, LA 70130

Owner: Billy Orgel
Tower Ventures
495 Tennessee Street
Memphis, TN 38103

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a 15-year PILOT lease for renovation of a historic industrial building for use as a 30,000 sq. ft. commercial event space at the November 8, 2019 CCRFC Board Meeting.

The subject property is located on the east side of N. Front Street, in the block between Keel Avenue and Looney Avenue in the Uptown neighborhood. The property includes a historic industrial building. The historic Tri State Iron Works Building (28,000 sf) is two-stories above grade with a large double height space and attached one-story sections. The building is a masonry structure with a timber floor and roof framing.

Five different industrial companies operated in the building at this address from 1883 to 1946. The building had operated as a cotton seed oil press, first as the Globe Oil and Fertilizer Company, then the Tennessee Cotton Oil company and finally as the Gayoso Oil Works. Between 1899 and the 1924 it operated as the Memphis Ginning and Cotton Huller Company.

Three masonry buildings originally made up the Tri State Iron Works. The first of these is a two-story administration building which remains relatively intact today. The second was the cotton press, which was a two-story masonry structure with large windows on all sides. The third building was the engine room and was a

single-story masonry structure with minimal smaller openings. The press and engine buildings became structurally dependent after a fire of 1907, and all three buildings were integrated by a single-story wood framed, weatherboard-clad structure. In addition to the conglomeration of these three masonry buildings and a wood framed building, a single-story masonry loading dock addition was added in 1927. During this time a shed roof was added to the exterior of the building on the south side, but this has since been removed.

After standing vacant until 1927, it was purchased for a manufacturing facility by the Tri State Iron Works. Tri State Iron Works, operated an iron and steel manufacturing facility at the site from 1927 until 1975. After 1975, the building was used for various light industrial uses, including metal work, purified water distribution, and currently serves as office and workshop for a bicycle company.

The applicant will return with a separate application for enhanced architectural lighting and signage.

Project Description:

The historic masonry facades will be retained, refurbished and repaired. Windows will be refurbished and, only if required, will be replaced in kind per historic guidelines. The historic pedestrian entrance in the administration building (an original half lite door with a two-part glass transom) will be retained and restored.

Two new pedestrian entrances will be added to the one-story, weatherboard-clad, warehouse structure on Keel Ave. The new entrances will entail swing doors to accommodate the increased egress exits required with the change in occupancy.

The East wall of the shop is a framed wall with a single layer of polycarbonate as an exterior finish. This wall will be re-clad in weatherboard to match the existing condition on adjacent elevations. New windows will be installed in this façade that will match the proportions of the existing windows in the adjacent weatherboard-clad elevations.

The South façade currently has garage door openings specifically used for loading. Two new pedestrian entrances will be added, one in the weatherboard-clad portion of the façade, and one in an existing opening in the historic masonry portion. The existing roofs are flat or low-sloping roofs and are to remain.

The site has a large portion on the south side that is vacant. This portion will remain so to accommodate 16 parking spaces for use by

the employees and guests of the event space. The site will be re-graded as required to meet ADA guidelines. The existing raised and flat concrete areas immediately adjacent to the building will be used as exterior courtyard spaces, and the necessary fencing will be installed.

The interior of the shop will be redeveloped to accommodate a banquet hall space. A new sprinkler system and HVAC system will be installed, and necessary new roof penetrations will be as far from the building edge as possible to obscure visibility. The existing floor in the shop space is concrete and contains a variety of levels, curbs and ramps making the space accessibly unnavigable. A new poured concrete floor will be installed to level out the floor and provide necessary accessible clearances to meet ADA requirements.

The existing engine room will become the warming kitchen, housing only warming appliances, sinks and cold and dry storage for food. A new restroom will be adjacent to the warming kitchen, and will include 9 new water closets and 8 lavatories. Interior historic brick walls will be retained, refurbished and repaired as required.

The interior of the administration building includes existing safes, counterweights and chutes. All historic elements will be retained. The historic interior existing wood trim is also to remain and replaced if necessary.

Staff Report:

The proposed site improvements are consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and DMC priorities of honoring the city's heritage. The project is also seeking to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places and therefore will require approval by the National Park Service and the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office. The proposed renovation will follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The proposed design combines various buildings and materials in a single unified design that clearly transforms the building into its new function as a unified event space. The corner space is the only exclusion of the new event space which will serve as a separate commercial tenant with a separate entrance.

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 creating more of a Landmark in the Snuff District.

Staff is supportive of the proposed design and feels that it is an appropriate direction for the renovation of the property.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval with the condition that the applicant return with a separate application for enhanced architectural lighting and signage. Approval is also conditional upon streetscaping being later incorporated following the streetscaping direction for the Snuff District.