



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

*New construction and site improvements for movie theater,
new apartments, and farmers market*

- Case # 15-81: Central Station Redevelopment
SW corner of South Main St. & G.E. Patterson Ave.
- Applicant: Central Station Redevelopment Master Developer
c/o Henry Turley Company
65 Union Avenue, Suite 1200
Memphis, TN 38103
- Property Owner: City of Memphis / Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA)
- Background: The applicant, a joint venture between the Henry Turley Company and Archie Willis III with Community Capital, is working with Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) to redevelop the Central Station property. The overall project will include a hotel, cinema, apartments, transit improvements, and site enhancements to benefit the Memphis Farmers Market. Total project development cost is estimated at \$55,000,000.
- On September 16, 2015, the Center City Development Corporation (CCDC) approved MATA's request for a \$200,000 Streetscape & Public Infrastructure Grant in support of the project. In addition to the CCDC Grant in support of the overall development, DRB review and approval is required since the site involves public property.
- Project Description: As described in the application, the current scope of work includes five (5) distinct phases as outlined below.
- Phase I: New Movie Theatre & Power House Plaza
A new six-screen Malco movie theater will be located at the southeast corner of G.E. Patterson Avenue and South Front Street. The theater building will include new construction as well as incorporate the existing historic Power House building. Parking for the theater is to be shared with the Farmers Market in the surface lot south of the building, in what will be known as Market Plaza. The primary entrance to the theater will be through Power House Plaza east of the Power House and from Market Plaza south of the theater.
- Principle exterior materials for the building include a concrete base and ADA accessible ramp, aluminum storefront system, metal panels,

brick veneer, and colored stucco. A wall-mounted sign consisting of individual channel letters to read “Malco” will be placed on the south elevation. Similar letters to read “Cinema” will be placed on the smokestack of the Power House building.

A significant design challenge associated with movie theatres in urban settings is that most of the exterior walls need to be solid and without openings in order to accommodate the darkened theater spaces. While the building elevations along G.E. Patterson and South Front Street will not feature traditional entry doors and transparent windows, the applicant has taken steps to meet the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines by adding items of interest to the pedestrian at street level. Low planters with vegetation will run the length of the north elevation. Several poster cases highlighting “Coming Attractions” will be located at pedestrian height along the north and west elevations. Additionally, the first and second levels will feature false windows with back-lit translucent glass. The window features, while not transparent, will appear illuminated at night and evoke a fenestration pattern typical of the district. The sections of uninterrupted exterior wall will not be blank and monotonous, but will feature cast stone medallions and alternating sections of colored stucco and brick veneer.

The existing Trolley Stop at the north end of the proposed Power House Plaza will be relocated to South Main Street near the intersection with St. Paul Avenue. As a later project phase, a proposed Concourse (tunnel) will connect Main Street to Market Plaza. The Concourse will run under the railroad platform and provide a new pedestrian link from South Main Street to the Farmers Market.

Phase II: Reconfigure Transit Terminal & Parking Lot

The existing surface parking lot used for the transit terminal and the Memphis Farmers Market will be modified to accommodate additional parking. Existing curb cuts and a concrete dividing wall will be removed. One option is to renovate the existing transit shed in its current configuration. Under that scenario, modifications would be made to the concrete slab under the shed to allow parking when the Farmers Market is not being held. Dependent on the availability of funding, the applicant’s first choice would be to reconfigure the parking sheds to increase covered parking and add additional stalls for the Farmers Market. The preferred scenario would include a series of sheds running perpendicular to South Front Street in lieu of the current t-shaped configuration.

Phase III: Front Street Apartments

The applicant proposes to construct seven (7) three-story apartment buildings in the vacant land between South Front Street and the Central Station Train Platform, just south of the Farmers Market. The existing Community Garden will be increased in size and relocated to the south end of the site.

This phase of the project will include 155 one & two bedroom apartment units. The buildings are generally situated along the Front

Street sidewalk edge with parking located to the rear. The central entry plaza including the leasing office, pool and fitness center are set back further.

The scale, massing, and exterior materials of these new apartments are similar to the recently completed South Junction Phase II units. Principle exterior materials include brick veneer, cementitious lap siding, and a simple gabled roof with shingles. As is the case with South Junction Apartments, exterior balconies will be a predominate feature.

Phase IV: Main Street Apartments & New Entry Drive

The applicant plans to relocate the entrance drive leading from South Main Street to the elevated railroad platform. By moving the drive further north, space will be available to construct a new 3-story apartment building at the northwest corner of Carolina Avenue and South Main Street. This building will contain 18 apartment units and have surface parking located to the rear and the north.

This apartment building, shown as Building Type II in the application materials, draws architectural inspiration from its industrial context. The building will feature a flat roof and a strong vertical orientation in the façade composition. Principle cladding materials include colored stucco and brick veneer in a stacked bond pattern. Exterior balconies will face South Main Street.

Phase V: Railroad Platform Apartments

A 24-unit apartment building will be located on the elevated railroad platform above South Main Street. This 3-story building will be the same type and design (Building Type II) as the one located at the corner of South Main Street and Carolina Avenue. Parking will be located to the rear of the building.

Future Project Phases:

Although not included in the current DRB application, future project phases will include a hotel in the historic Central Station Tower; renovation of existing commercial spaces; Pedestrian Concourse and entry features; a new Amtrak ticketing and waiting building; a new Trolley Station on South Main Street; new bus shelters along Main Street and a reconfiguration of the existing parking on the elevated railroad platform to accommodate the new hotel and Amtrak.

Staff Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval**