



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

Exterior Renovation

Case # 21-21: 294 Hernando St.
Memphis, TN 38126

Applicant: Anasa Troutman, Executive Director
294 Hernando St.
Memphis, 38126

Representative Jayme Stokes, Engagement Practice Leader
Bass River Advisors
280 Hernando St.
Memphis, TN 38126

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a South City Good Neighbor Grant at the February 17th, 2021, CCDC meeting.

The subject property is located south of M.L.K. Jr. Ave., on the northeast corner of E. Pontotoc Ave. and Hernando St. The Romanesque Revival church was built in 1892 as Second Presbyterian Church. In 1949, the church was sold to an African-American congregation, who changed the property's name to Clayborn Temple in honor of a local African Methodist Episcopal (AME) bishop.

Clayborn Temple is a valuable piece of Memphis history, as it was the meeting place for civil rights and labor activists to organize throughout the civil rights movement of the 1960's. The congregation later moved from the church (ca. 1999), leaving the building vacant for a number of years, until 2015.

Today, Clayborn Temple operates as a 501(c)3 organization committed to developing new programs and community engagement processes inspired by the work of Dr. M.L.K. Jr. and the sanitation workers through storytelling, community building and wealth-building for African-American communities.

Project Description: The Romanesque Revival building is currently undergoing the renovation process guided by staff, the board of directors, and a

small team of consultants. Restoration of the stained glass is part of phase 2 of the entire building's renovation project. The stained-glass restoration focuses specifically on the North, South and West facades.

Pearl River Glass Studio will lead the design of the new state-of-the-art glass replacement. The new window designs will feature animations of the work of the Sanitation Workers Strike in 1968. The commissioned artwork must receive approval by the National Park Service, the State Historic Preservation Office of Tennessee and Clayborn's selection panel prior to installation. The selected artists will collaborate closely with site engineers, landscape architects and Pearl River Glass Studio to digitally translate the final design.

The applicant is planning exterior improvements to the building and site including stained glass removal, window jamb removal and repair, stained glass restoration, and the creation of new stained glass.

Staff Report:

The stained-glass windows of Clayborn Temple are a defining feature of the church that provide beautification, identity and pride to the South City neighborhood.

Due to the building's neglect in previous years, many of the windows along the pedestrian-facing facades have been damaged or removed entirely. Several of the original windows were destroyed during the riots after the assassination of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Others are generally in good condition and only need minor cleaning and/or repairs.

In February 2021, Clayborn Temple released a call for artists to design the new stained-glass window panes, drawing inspiration from the historic events of the Sanitation Workers Strike of 1968. The top three finalists have been selected and are included in this application. The final choice will be revealed as part of MLK's memorial celebrations during the month of April.

Staff believes that restoration of the historic windows will greatly enhance the appearance of the building, further strengthening the pedestrian experience and character of the building.

Staff Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval.**