



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

New Construction

Case # 21-11: The Walk (Building G)
341 Union Ave
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant: Roy Beauchamp
LRK
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Memphis, TN 38103

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a 30-Year PILOT at the August 11, 2020 CCRFC Board Meeting.

The Walk, formerly known as Union Row, is a large mixed-use development which will cover 21.54 acres, with primary frontage on Union Ave, Danny Thomas Blvd, Gayoso Ave, and Beale St. The complete development will include apartments, retail, class A office space, multiple hotels, and structured parking. The current application is only for the exterior design of one of the development's primary buildings, referred to in this staff report as Building G.

Project Description: Building G of The Walk will be located on a block bounded by Union on the north, Danny Thomas on the east, Gayoso on the south, and a new street to the west (referred to in this staff report as Fifth Street). Most of the building will be occupied by multifamily housing, accompanied by a new parking garage fronting Danny Thomas, and a series of retail spaces facing Fifth Street on the west.

The northwest corner of the building, facing Union, will feature a two-story "jewel-box" restaurant space that will draw pedestrians into the development's Fifth Street retail core. East of this restaurant space, the building transitions into a six-story section of multifamily housing. The ground-floor of the multifamily section will be sided with brick, with cast stone at the base of the building. A two-story paseo entry surrounded by architectural masonry will provide access from Union to an interior courtyard. The upper residential floors will be primarily clad with brick, as well as fiber cement panels. Horizontal and vertical articulation will be used to visually break up

the building's mass, including a courtyard on Union, near the east end of the building. Varying window patterns will also be used to break of the façade, and create a division between upper and lower portions of the building.

On the east side of the building, facing Danny Thomas, the six-story residential portion of the building continues for about a third of the block. The rest of the block is fronted by the development's five-story parking garage. The parking garage will be screened with perforated metal panels of varying colors.

The south side of the building, facing Gayoso, is divided into three visually distinct sections. On the east side of the block, the garage continues for about a third of the block's length. The middle section of the block is fronted by a seven-story stretch of multifamily residential, using a similar mix of materials as the frontage on Union. On the west side of the block, the primary material transitions from fiber cement to brick veneer, with fiber cement shiplap used as trim around the residential windows, and fiber cement panels used as an accent material on the top floor. The ground floor at the southwest corner includes double-height storefront windows, and an overhead door east of these windows provides service access to the building.

The west side of the building, facing Fifth Street, contains the building's primary retail frontage. The southwest corner continues the treatment from the building's south side, with brick veneer siding, and double-height storefront windows at the ground floor. Travelling north, this corner is followed by a series of seven distinct retail bays, which use differences in materials and window layout to break up the ground floor. There are five floors of residential above these bays, clad primarily in fiber cement panels. The "jewel-box" restaurant with frontage on Union also continues along the west side of the building at the northwest corner.

Additional public landscaping and streetscaping elements around Building G will include street trees and planters along every public street, as well as new public seating and bike racks. Landscaping plans, including specific plant and tree species, have been included in the application.

Staff Report:

For decades, the area of Downtown that will be occupied by The Walk has been defined by vacant lots and surface parking, punctuated by a handful of small commercial buildings. Rather than helping to connect Downtown's vibrant core with the growing amenities of the Edge district, this area has been an uncomfortable

obstacle for pedestrians. The plans for Building G of The Walk promise to provide an unprecedented level of urban vitality and connectivity in this formerly underutilized area.

The design of Building G consistently reflects one of the core principles of the Downtown Design Guidelines: Downtown development should be designed to enhance the pedestrian experience. New public spaces, including the new green space fronting the retail row on the building's west side, are deployed strategically to create a series of pedestrian amenities. Changes in materials are used to establish a pedestrian-scale at the ground floor. Parking is screened on the primary pedestrian corridors. Paseos accessible from the street connect the building's interior spaces with the street, providing additional opportunities for pedestrian interaction. The "jewel-box" restaurant fronting Union provides a visual queue that will draw pedestrians to the development's new retail street.

But perhaps more important than any design feature of the building itself is the role the building will play in connecting two of Downtown's most exciting districts. By expanding retail and residences in the Downtown Core eastward toward Danny Thomas, this phase of The Walk will be a key step toward bridging the vibrancy of the Core with the growing Edge District.

Staff Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval, with the condition of later approval for signage and lighting.**