



Design Review Board (DRB) Staff Report
Prepared for the June 2, 2021 DRB Meeting

Exterior Lighting

Case # 21-40: 99 – 105 S. Front St.
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant: Robert Baddour
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Owner: Billy Orgel
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Background: The DRB approved the exterior renovation plans for 99 – 105 S. Front at its April 1, 2020 meeting. This approval was conditioned on later approvals for signage and exterior lighting. The current application under consideration is for the exterior lighting portion of the 99 – 105 S. Front project.

All construction projects that require DRB approval must submit their lighting plan for approval, if new lighting is planned. However, the 99 – 105 S. Front project also received an additional PILOT year for “enhanced architectural lighting.” The Board must not only determine whether the lighting is generally appropriate, but whether it meets the standard of enhanced architectural lighting.

Project Description: Custom light fixtures designed to replicate original lamps will be placed on either side of 99 S. Front’s primary doors facing Front Street. A linear LED downlight will also be placed above this doorway. Slim linear LED fixtures will provide architectural uplighting at three different points on 99 S. Front’s façade: the base of the first floor, the base of the fifth floor, and below existing engraved text on the building’s cornice. Linear LED downlights will also illuminate the two doorways on the façade of 105 S. Front.

On the north side of 99 S. Front, facing Barbaro Alley, additional LED uplights will be installed along the base of the second and fifth

floors for the length of the decorative trim that continues from the Front St. façade. Small LED wall fixtures will provide functional lighting at the ground floor for the rest of the building's alley frontage.

On the west side of the development, facing Wagner Place, LED wall fixtures will be installed on the ground floor between the windows. A linear LED fixture will provide downlighting above the overhead door on the west side of 105 S. Front. On the south side of 99 S. Front, LED strand lights will be hung at the base of the second floor facing an atrium that will be carved out of 105 S. Front.

Staff Report:

The lighting package for 99 – 105 S. Front is being evaluated both for its appropriateness according to the Downtown Design Guidelines, but also on whether it meets the PILOT program's intent for "enhanced architectural lighting." The Downtown Design Guidelines do not contain detailed standards for exterior lighting, but they recommend using exterior lighting to enhance the public realm and improve the pedestrian experience. In evaluating whether an application counts as "enhanced architectural lighting" for the purposes of PILOT grading, DRB staff look for lighting features that are designed to noticeably enhance and highlight the building's architecture, rather than providing only functional lighting.

The decorative façade of 99 S. Front is the most visually striking portion of the 99 – 105 S. Front development, and the lighting package focuses its architectural lighting in this area. The proposed uplighting for 99 S. Front will highlight the distinct vertical divisions of the façade, as well as the historic engraved text at the cornice. The custom fixtures near the central entrance pay homage to the character of the building's historic lights. Meanwhile, the light fixtures on the buildings' more utilitarian secondary elevations will provide adequate functional lighting for safety and pedestrian comfort. As a whole, the proposed lighting plan meets both the general guidelines for Downtown lighting, and fulfils the standard of "enhanced architectural lighting."

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval.