



**Design Review Board (DRB) Staff Report**  
*Prepared for the March 1, 2023 DRB Meeting*

Exterior Renovation, Lighting, and Public Art

Case # 23-12: Creative Co-working  
635 Madison Avenue  
Memphis, TN 38103

Owner/Applicant: John Halford  
cnct. design + develop  
635 Madison Avenue  
Memphis, TN 38103

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received an Exterior Improvement Grant (EIG) at the January 18, 2023 CCDC Board Meeting.

The subject property has frontage along Marshall Avenue as well as an alley between Marshall and Madison Avenue. The proposed project will add two storefronts to the back of this building facing the alley while making major improvements to the alley. An office for cnct. design + develop will be one storefront. Ugly Art Co. studios, gallery space, and retail space will be another storefront. Art will spill into the alley in the form of asphalt art and lighting. The alley will connect the site, strengthening access to a central courtyard and pedestrian traffic within the Edge District.

Project Description: The building exterior will be prepared with masonry repair & detailing, select repairs, and framing support. A new pre-finished parapet cap, TPO roof, and gutter & downspout will also be added. The exterior will be painted a soft white (SW Greek Villa – 7551). A large public art installation spanning all exterior walls is being developed. Koi fish are included as placeholders in the renderings. The design is being refined by local artists led by Ugly Art Co., but the koi fish theme is expected to carry through to the final design.

New glazing throughout will greatly increase visibility and interior lighting. In the existing upper level boarded up window openings, new operable glazing will be installed. The northeast wall facing the courtyard will become the main entrance to the architecture and development office. Here, a glass storefront system will span the

entire lower level and replace two existing garage doors. On the northwest wall, a glass storefront door will be a secondary entrance/exit.

On the northeast wall facing the alley, a new glass garage door will be installed where there is currently an old solid garage door. It will be opened during business hours when weather allows. Here, a glass storefront door will be the main entrance to Ugly Art Co. A projecting light box sign is planned for the space and will be submitted for approval at a later date.

All the glazing hardware finishes will be a dark bronze anodized aluminum. The existing glass block windows throughout the building will remain. The glazing and the glass garage door are expected to meet the performance requirements for LEED certification. Additionally, the energy efficient electrical, mechanical, and plumbing upgrades have been designed with the expectation to grade as a LEED certified renovation on a performance basis after at least one year of operation making this a carbon-positive building.

Permanent concrete planters will be added beside the glass garage door. Additional movable planters will be included to allow for flexible site control. Street furniture will be added to the front of the cnct. design + develop office.

Artistic lighting will be designed and installed above the alley allowing for visual interest and nighttime safety. The final design will be refined so the renderings only include placeholders.

The alley will be repaved where it abuts the applicant properties. The remaining portion will be cleaned up and finished off with gravel. Asphalt art will further define the creative space and attract foot traffic. Plans for sidewalk and curb cut improvements along Madison Avenue will be develop further and submitted for a DMC Sidewalk Grant. A lot to the south of the site will allow access from the alley to Marshall Avenue. Here, there is a significant grade change. So, the existing berm will be trimmed, graded, and landscaped as required to mitigate water runoff and erosion. Then, a new, concrete staircase will be installed.

Staff Report:

This project activates a previously vacant space and introduces exterior improvements that go above and beyond typical building maintenance. It reinforces the creative character of the Edge District

and builds upon a well-trodden path to create an intriguing connector.

The many doors and windows bring light into the building and reinforce a sense of activity in the area. The artistic lighting installation not only adds visual interest but also greatly improves comfort and safety for pedestrians.

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