



## Design Review Board (DRB) Staff Report

Landscaping, Lighting, and Exterior Design Revision  
*Submitted for Approval at the May 4, 2022 DRB Meeting*

Case # 22-21: 1030 Poplar Apartments  
1030 Poplar Ave  
Memphis, TN 38105

Applicant: Amin Zaki  
1030 Poplar LLC  
7842 Farmington Blvd  
Germantown, TN 38138

Background: The subject property is an existing multifamily development that received a CCRFC PILOT to assist with an extensive renovation of the property. The DRB approved the applicant's exterior renovation plans at its March 3, 2021 meeting, conditioned on additional approvals for lighting and landscaping. These additional elements have now been submitted for approval in the current application. In addition to the lighting and landscaping, the applicant is also requesting a modification to the exterior design as originally submitted.

Project Description: There are three design elements the Board is being asked to consider in the present application:

- Architectural Lighting
- Landscaping
- A modification to the original exterior design.

### **Architectural Lighting**

Slim recessed LED downlights will be installed under the soffits on the east and west side of the south building, as well as the south side of the north building. The lights will highlight the vertical sections of fiber cement siding surrounding each pair of windows, accentuating the visual rhythm of the building. Recessed LED lights will also be installed under the soffits above the second floor balconies on the south and north sides of the south building, and the east and west sides of the north building. Wall sconces that align with these recessed lights will be installed on the first floor below each balcony. Additionally, vertical LED wall lamps will be

installed on either side of the entrance to the manager's office on the Poplar façade of the south building.

### **Landscaping**

The landscaping plans for the property include small landscaped buffer areas planted with Maiden Grass, concentrated on the southeast corner of the site, as well as two landscaped courtyards at the center of the development's two buildings. The landscaped courtyards will include paved areas with benches and other seating, surrounded by planted areas with a mixture of climate-appropriate shrubs, flowering plants, and trees. A list of species is included in the application. Two existing trees in the north courtyard will be maintained.

### **Exterior Design Modification**

The original design submitted to the Board featured a modern metal façade that significantly changed the appearance of the building's Poplar Ave frontage. Due to rising material costs, the applicant is now proposing a less dramatic refresh of the façade. Rather than covering the entire façade with metal panels, metal panels will only be used on two central pillars. The rest of the façade will be cleaned, repaired, and painted. On the other sides of the building, the applicant is requesting a minor change in the paint color, and to use PTAC air conditioning units, which will be visible underneath the windows. (Previously the building had traditional window A/C units in the same location).

### **Staff Report:**

The lighting and landscaping plans for 1030 Poplar build on the renovation of the buildings, and further enhance the project. Both elements are consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines. However, the lighting plan requires a level of consideration beyond mere appropriateness. When the CCRFC approved a PILOT for 1030 Poplar, the approval included the possibility of an additional PILOT year conditioned on the inclusion of "enhanced architectural lighting." Staff has interpreted this as meaning lighting that goes above and beyond the functional lighting that would be expected on any development, and has a clear aesthetic impact on the appearance of the building itself. After reviewing the lighting package, staff believes that the recessed soffit lighting and vertical lamps proposed for 1030 Poplar can be considered as meeting this standard.

The modification of the approved exterior plans, most notably the alteration of the façade, remain consistent with the rationale for the original approval. The previously-approved treatment of the Poplar façade represented a significant change to the character of the existing building. Although staff considered this to be an acceptable

design approach due to the building's lack of significant architectural character, it was not material to the recommendation for approval. The modified exterior treatment of the building still represents a substantial improvement from the building's previously dilapidated condition, and staff continues to be supportive of the project as submitted in the revised application.

**Staff Recommendation:**    **Staff recommends approval.**