



Design Review Board (DRB) Staff Report
Prepared for the September 6, 2023 DRB Meeting

New Construction

Case # 23-63: 1162 Peabody Ave.
New construction of a 12-unit apartment building
Memphis, TN 38104

Applicant/Owner: Alfredo Cerpa
Cerpa Construction & Simpson Construction
4541 Chickasaw Rd
Memphis, TN 38117

Background: The subject property is a 0.275-acre vacant lot located on the north side of Peabody Ave, just east of I-240. The lot's immediate neighbors on Peabody are multifamily buildings, and the lot is zoned RU-3, which allows for several types of multifamily buildings. An existing structure on site was demolished in 2018 by a previous owner.

The applicant plans to build a new 12-unit multifamily building on the lot. The planned three-story structure will include a mixture of one bedroom and studio apartments, and will be served by 13 secure parking spots located behind the building. Ground floor units facing Peabody will feature patios screened by new landscaping.

DRB review is required for this project because it received a 10-year PILOT from the Center City Revenue Finance Corporation (CCRFC) at its June 13, 2023 meeting.

Project Description: The rectilinear site plan is organized to create an urban frontage and appropriate front setback. The site plan is designed to place all surface parking to the rear of a new 3-story building with landscaping at the front along Peabody Ave. A perimeter fence and new swinging driveway gate will help provide security for the residents.

While the composition and balance of materials on each building elevation varies, the primary exterior building materials on all sides are brick (General Shale – Mountain Smoke) and fiber cement board lap siding (off-white color). The front-facing façade features a full brick elevation with a decorative masonry pattern of horizontal

banding and a pre-finished metal coping along the parapet. Operable glass doors (complete with Juliet balconies on the upper floors) are visible from Peabody Avenue. A front-facing patio with a raised planter bed and pedestrian gates help provide a sense of privacy for the ground floor units without presented a blank wall to the pedestrian realm. The planter wall will feature a corrugated concrete pattern.

The east, west, and north elevations feature brick on the ground floor and introduce cement fiber board lap siding as a significant cladding material on the upper floors. Exterior lighting will include three (3) up-down wall sconces on the front (south) elevation and one (1) downlight fixture on both the north and west elevations. All lighting sconces will feature a dark bronze finish.

Staff Recommendation:

Simply put, the DRB's Design Guidelines encourage new infill that appropriately fits its context. New construction should not strive to look artificially old, but should be designed to be a product of its own time while respecting the established character of the neighborhood. Staff's opinion is that the proposed new construction meets this objective in four key ways. First, the massing and scale of the rectangular building form reflects a traditional four-square building, a common typology in this part of the core city. The proposed design is an appropriately contemporary interpretation of this common building form.

Second, the front building setback strikes a successful balance between matching the adjacent buildings and gradually shifting buildings up towards the sidewalk. A reduced front yard setback, as in this case, can help create a more urban condition and improve walkability by activating the public realm with windows, doors, and an outdoor patio all facing the public sidewalk.

Third, the extensive use of exterior brick and the addition of horizontal lap siding as a secondary cladding material reflects a traditional material palette common within the neighborhood. Finally, the site layout places surface parking to the rear and screened from view. Making parking subordinate to the primary structure is a key strategy for encouraging new infill that fits the traditional building pattern in a neighborhood where front yard surface parking is generally inappropriate and out of character.

Staff recommends approval.