



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

Exterior Renovation

Case # 21-86: 626 Vance Ave.
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant / Owner: Carolyn Warren
4069 Ridgedale St.
Memphis, TN 38127

Rickey Montgomery
4366 Field Oak Rd.
Memphis, TN 38053

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a South City Good Neighbor Grant at the August 18th, 2021, CCDC meeting.

The subject property is located on the northern side of Vance Ave., in the block between Cynthia Pl. and S Orleans St. The site contains a 2,200 sq. ft. building, built in 1951. The ground floor is occupied by the owner, and the second floor is used as an apartment. There are two entrances along the Vance Ave. façade, one door that leads to the apartment on the second floor, and one into the ground floor commercial space. There is a third entrance at the rear of the building.

Project Description: The scope of work includes exterior building repair, tuck-point/masonry, sidewalk repair, painting, signage, new awnings, door replacement, exterior lighting, and art.

All windows and doors need to be replaced, as well as the existing awning. The brick will be repaired with tuck-pointing, pressure-washed, and painted. The limestone parapet cap will remain. New exterior lighting will be added to the south and east facades. The existing entrance along Vance Ave. will be repaired and upgraded with a new concrete patio, planters, and furniture.

A new mural will be painted on the highly-visible eastern façade.

Staff Report:

The South City Good Neighbor Grant aims to help new and existing businesses succeed by enhancing their curb appeal in ways that might not be possible without assistance. This project joins a network of approved SCGN projects along the Vance Ave. corridor, with Memphis Magnetic Recording to the direct west of the property.

A new vibrant, occupied, commercial space along Vance Ave. helps to support the new and existing businesses in the South City Neighborhood. The new outdoor seating space, exterior lighting, art, and planters create an inviting atmosphere for pedestrians. An increase in pedestrian activity, lighting, and ownership in the neighborhood increases perceived safety with business owners, pedestrians, and residents.

The owner intends to hire qualified applicants from the neighborhood to occupy the ground floor retail space as a coffee shop. The ground floor will also sell and display local Memphis artwork. The second-floor apartment tenant will remain.

Staff is supportive of the proposed renovations and believes that the high-quality improvements bring added character and vibrancy to Vance Avenue, a gateway into Downtown and a major corridor for the South City neighborhood.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval with the condition that signage be submitted to staff separately.