



Design Review Board (DRB) Staff Report

Prepared for the November 2, 2022 DRB Meeting

New Construction

Case # 22-57:

The Vic on Union
785 Union
Memphis, TN 38104

Applicant:

Kate Good
Huntington Residential
3773 Richmond Ave, Suite 800
Houston, TX 77046

Background:

DRB review is required for this project because it received approval for a PILOT incentive at the October 11, 2022 Center City Revenue Finance Corporation (CCRFC) Board Meeting.

The Vic on Union is a proposed multifamily development with 287 apartment units that the applicant plans to construct on a site previously occupied by an office supply store at 785 Union Avenue. The building site is located across from Health Sciences Park on the south side of Union, bounded by Walnut Street on the east, and Manassas Street on the west. In addition to five stories of residential units, the development will feature a seven-level parking structure facing Walnut, containing approximately 327 parking spaces.

Project Description:

The proposed building is a five-story residential building built around a central courtyard space, with an attached seven-level parking garage on the building's east side. The residential building will wrap around the northeast corner of the garage, reducing its visibility on the building's Union façade.

On the building's north side, facing Union Ave, thin brick veneer will be the primary exterior material, covering over 60% of the façade. Thin stone veneer will also be used as an accent material, highlighting the entrance to a central walkway leading to the building's courtyard. This entrance will also be accented by arched elements that are intended to reference the architecture of the nearby UT Health Science Center. Fiber cement panels will be used as a secondary exterior material on the upper floors. Many upper floor units will feature balconies with metal railings. Amenity spaces for

the building will be concentrated along the ground floor on Union, with large storefront windows providing visibility into the interior. The building will also step back slightly from the northwest corner of the lot, creating a small plaza near the location of a planned bus rapid transit stop.

On the building's east side, facing Walnut, the residential portion of the building wraps around the northeast corner, with thin brick veneer on the first floor, and fiber cement panels on the floors above. The majority of the development's frontage facing Walnut will be taken up by the seven-level concrete parking garage. Thin brick veneer will continue along the base of the garage to surround the primary vehicular entrance. The remaining garage exterior will be clad with decorative Structurflex panels to add visual interest.

On the building's south side, facing Beale, the garage frontage continues along the southeast corner. The residential building will take up the majority of the frontage on the south side, with thin brick veneer on the ground floor and southwest corner, and fiber cement panels on the remaining exterior walls. In addition to upper-floor balconies with metal railings, some of the ground floor units will feature fenced outdoor patios. A pet park will be located on the southern tip of the lot, which is unbuildable due to an existing utility easement.

The building's residential frontage continues on the west side of the building, facing Manassas. Thin brick veneer will be used on the entirety of the ground floor, while fiber cement will be the primary material on the upper floors, with thin brick used as an accent. Similar to the building's Beale frontage, the west side of the building will also feature fenced patios for ground floor units in addition to upper floor balconies.

Staff Report:

The site of the proposed development is just across the street from Health Sciences Park in the heart of Downtown's Medical District. However, the property is currently home to a vacant big-box retail building surrounded by a large surface parking lot. In contrast, the proposed building will be pulled up to the street, with a significant amount of ground floor transparency on Union. Structured parking for the development will be wrapped by the building on its primary Union frontage, and the rest of it will incorporate a visually interesting screening material. Durable masonry will be used as the exterior material for the entirety of the building's ground floor, as well as the majority of the building's Union façade. By replacing low-density suburban retail with high-density urban apartments, the

proposed project represents another step toward achieving a more livable Medical District.

Staff Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval, with the condition of additional applications for signage, landscaping, lighting, and the final screening plan for the garage.**