



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

Exterior Renovation

Case # 20-84

371 S. Main St.
Memphis, TN 38103

Property Owner:

Miguel Gomez
371 S. Main St.
Memphis, TN 38013

Representative:

Steve Carter
Gimbal & Company, LLC
PO Box 172063
Memphis, TN 38187

Background:

DRB review is required for the exterior elements of this project because it received an Exterior Improvement Grant from the Center City Development Corporation (CCDC) at its October 21, 2020 meeting.

The subject property is located at the southwest corner of Talbot Ave. and South Main St. The 0.13-acre site contains a 5,176 sq. ft. 2-story historic commercial building.

The differing masonry types indicate that the current structure was built in 3 different phases of construction. In the mid-1800's, much of Main St. was still under development, therefore, the building was originally designed to front Talbot Ave. The western portion of the building was constructed around 1850, with a balcony facing Talbot Avenue and is believed to have functioned as a two story brothel.

In the mid 1870's, the buildings eastern façade was brought up to the newly defined Main Street sidewalk. The addition consisted of a downstairs retail or common area, with residential space above. The building continued operations as a brothel until the 1930's, and then a boarding house until the 1950's. The remains of stove flues and original demising walls remain throughout the entire upstairs and western downstairs areas.

From the 1950's to the 1990's, the building was owned by a couple of different individuals. The property was used as a warehouse to

support an adjacent retail store (the current location of Spindini) and then suffered a partial collapse during renovation work in 1993.

The Gomez family purchased the damaged building in 1993, stabilized the structure, and have routinely repaired and maintained the integrity of the original building since that time. The property will be fully restored and renovated to accommodate commercial use on the first and second floors. An additional exterior staircase will be added to provide external access to the second floor, allowing for multiple tenants to occupy separate spaces of the renovated building.

Construction is expected to begin in spring 2021.

Project Description:

The property will be fully renovated and tenant ready for commercial use on the first and second floor. An exterior stair will be added so that the upper and lower floors may be leased by multiple tenants.

The building exterior and site will be fully renovated and made tenant ready as follows: All doors and windows will be replaced with historically appropriate high quality construction; architectural lighting will be added along South Main and Talbot, brick will be cleaned and repaired in the gentlest means possible, and ghost signage preserved; landscaped rear courtyard will include colored and stamped concrete, a new exterior stair, wrought iron fencing, landscape and irrigation; a concrete parking lot will be added, and the Talbot sidewalk will be replaced; an ADA compliant entrance will be added on Talbot street.

Staff Report:

Staff is supportive of the proposed renovations to 371 S. Main St. The DMC's Strategic Plan encourages facilitating and accelerating real estate development, incentivizing Downtown development when necessary to increase investment and economic development, and fighting blight to improve the visual appearance of the built environment Downtown. This project will put a vacant historic building back into productive use within a key retail node.

The applicant is proposing significant, high-quality exterior improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience along South Main and that are consistent in character with surrounding historic buildings in the South Main district. This project will join other recently approved, exciting projects on this same block of South Main, 372 S. Main, 376 S. Main, and 400 S. Main.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval.