



Design Review Board (DRB) Staff Report
Prepared for the September 7, 2022 DRB Meeting

Signage

Case # 22-42:	South City Monument Signage 367 Vance Ave Memphis, TN 38126
Applicant:	Emily Bernstein McCormack Baron Salazar, Inc. 100 N Broadway, Suite 100 St. Louis, MO 63102
Background:	The South City Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is a comprehensive effort to redevelop the site of the former Foote Homes housing project into a new mixed-income community with higher quality housing and neighborhood amenities. Phases 3 and 4 of the project are located inside the CBID, and require DRB approval for their signage. Signs within the CBID are typically reviewed and approved administratively by DRB Staff, but in this case, the applicant is seeking an exception from code standards for their proposed monument signage.
Project Description:	<p>There are two signs included in the current application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sign 1 – South City Phase III Monument Sign<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Description: An 8 ft. 2 in. (h) by 36 ft. (w) monument sign consisting of a curved brick wall with cast stone pier caps on either end. The wall features 2 ft. (h) by 5 ft. 4 in. (w) cast stone signage panels on both sides of the wall reading “SOUTH CITY,” and the cast stone pier caps include recessed letters reading “SC” on both sides of the wall. The total area of the signage will be 168 sq. ft. The sign will be located in a landscaped area addressing the corner of Danny Thomas Boulevard and Butler Avenue.○ Code Issues: The Downtown Sign Code limits monument signs to 35 sq. ft. in total area.• Sign 2 – South City Phase IV Monument Sign

- An 8 ft. 2 in. (h) by 14 ft. 5 in. (w) monument sign consisting of a brick wall with cast stone pier caps on either end. The wall features 2 ft. (h) by 5 ft. 4 in. (w) cast stone signage panels on both sides of the wall reading “SOUTH CITY,” and the cast stone pier caps include recessed letters reading “SC” on both sides of the wall. The total area of the proposed sign is 82 sq. ft. The sign will be located in a landscaped median on Ishmael Place, at the intersection of Ishmael Place and Vance Avenue.
- **Code Issues:** The Downtown Sign Code limits monument signs to 35 sq. ft. in total area.

Staff Report:

The Downtown Sign Code contains the following language regarding the criteria for granting exceptions from code standards:

“All signs in the CBID shall adhere to the following guidelines and size limitations except in cases where outstandingly creative design solutions are offered. In such cases, if a proposal incorporates unique or high quality materials (such as neon, hand painting, some metals, well-crafted wood), exterior lighting (such as floodlighting), unique shapes, and outstanding graphic composition, a sign exceeding the limits stated in this Division 2 may be approved. All signs should, however, be appropriately scaled to fit their context, should complement the building on which they are located, and not intrude upon any architectural detail.”

The proposed signs are high-quality, and have been thoughtfully designed to integrate with the overall landscaping plan for the development, as well as the architecture of the revitalized South City neighborhood. The design of the signage is distinct from a typical monument sign, which usually consists of a large sign cabinet mounted on top of a solid base. In appearance, the proposed signs more closely resemble traditional brick walls, and the cast stone signage panels themselves are relatively modest in scale. The overall scale of the signage is also appropriate to the role the signage will play as neighborhood gateways.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval.