Design Review Board (DRB) Staff Report
Prepared for the November 1, 2023 DRB Meeting

New Construction

Case # 23-71:	Uptown Cottages, 164 Keel Ave. & 701 Third St.
Owner/ Applicant:	Mr. Jittapong Malasri 65 Union Ave, STE 800 Memphis, TN 38103
Background:	The subject property consists of two adjacent residential lots in the Uptown neighborhood. The 0.23-acre site is located on the north side of Keel Avenue, in the block between Lyceum Lane and North Third Street and about 1 block south of Chelsea Avenue. The plan is to build four new residential units in the model of "missing middle" housing. This approach to building new housing seeks to fill the gaps in established neighborhoods with smaller-scale housing units and building typologies that more closely reflect what was traditionally built in the core city. DRB review is required for this project because it received approval of a $300,000 Development Loan at the August 16, 2023 CCDC Board Meeting.
Project Description:	For this specific project, the applicant is proposing a total of four cottage-style residential buildings. Two of the buildings will be 1-bedroom units and two of the buildings will be 2-bedroom units. All four buildings will be market-rate rental housing. The two lots have received the necessary land use approvals from the Board of Adjustments (BOA 21-73 & BOA 21-174), ensuring that the developer's vision aligns with the city's zoning regulations for new growth in Uptown. The floorplans and exterior elevations for each new structure borrow heavily from the traditional neighborhood vernacular seen historically in Uptown and more recently in the Malone Park Commons development. A two-story (2 BR) cottage will front Keel Avenue to the south and follow a 10 ft. build-to line to follow the development pattern seen within this residential block. A smaller one-story (1 BR) cottage will be located behind the larger cottage. Both cottages will feature front porches and surface parking on a driveway to the north and east. Parking ingress and egress will be

provided through an existing easement with the neighboring property immediately to the east.

A second two-story (2 BR) cottage will front N. Third Street to the east. A smaller one-story (1 BR) cottage will be located to the rear of the larger cottage. Both cottages will feature front porches. Surface parking will be provided on a driveway with access from public alleys to the north and from the west.

Each of the four planned cottages will be similar in design and feature cementitious siding as the primary exterior cladding material. As a relatively small infill development project on a tight budget, the applicant is taking a design-build approach to the final design plans and documentation. The included floor plans and building elevations provided in the DRB application are highly representative of the overall design intent and general dimensions. However, the following field modifications are planned:

A. The proposed windows are white vinyl, similar to the Malone Park Commons cottages at Looney Ave. This type of window is a budget-friendly design solution that can also be found in many examples of new construction within the neighborhood.

B. The exterior cladding will be horizontal cementitious siding with a 7-inch reveal. A horizontal band will divide the first and second floors. The second story is to be extended in the rear similar to the example of Malone Park Commons.

C. All four cottages will utilize a raised concrete slab instead of a pier foundation. This will eliminate the need to add lattice or a similar infill material between piers.

D. In lieu of a metal roof, new roofing will consist of 3-tab asphalt shingles.

E. Exterior paint colors have been chosen to match those seen in the neighborhood and will utilize a historic color palette to include:

162 Keel (2 BR)
- Needlepoint Navy (exterior walls)
- Classic Light Buff (exterior trim & columns)

164 Keel (1 BR)
- Downing Earth (exterior walls)
- Renwick Beige (exterior trim & columns

701 Third (2 BR)
- Sheraton Sage (exterior walls)
- Downing Sand (exterior trim & columns)

703 Third (1 BR)
- Favorite Tan (exterior walls)
- Cornwall Slate (exterior trim & columns)

Staff Recommendation: In staff's opinion, the proposed infill development is consistent with the DRB's overall goals of encouraging compatible infill in core city neighborhoods. With respect to the site plan design, building height & scale, and use of exterior materials, the four cottages fit well within the established context. Additionally, the adherence to the established build-to lines and the addition of usable front porches will further establish the aesthetic connection between this new construction and the existing buildings that give this vibrant neighborhood its character and sense of place.

Moreover, supporting new infill housing in the Uptown neighborhood and the North CBID is highly consistent with the DMC's dual goals of increasing population density and improving commercial property values through high-quality commercial development. The project increases Downtown housing options and diversity of offerings by adding unique cottage-style housing product to the market. This type of "missing middle" housing is contextually appropriate infill that can help stitch back together the fabric of urban neighborhoods with a history of disinvestment and a reality of far too many vacant lots.

Finally, the applicant for the project is an emerging developer and Downtown resident with a strong interest in urban revitalization. Growing the Memphis developer ecosystem and supporting new and emerging developers are important goals of both the DMC and CCDC. The Downtown Development Loan program was reimagined by DMC staff and reapproved by the CCDC Board in 2018 to better support emerging developers and small-scale commercial development projects. This type of project is exactly the kind of investment that the changes to the CCDC's Development Loan program were intended to encourage.

Staff recommends approval.