



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

New Construction

Case # 21-10: URBN on Union
1338 Union
Memphis, TN 38104

Applicant: URBN Union LLC
1331 Union Ave, Ste 750-F
Memphis, TN 38104

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a 20-Year PILOT at the February 9, 2021 CCRFC Board Meeting.

The subject property is made up of 8 parcels on the block north of Union between Cleveland and Claybrook. The property includes two existing buildings – a First Horizon branch and an IberiaBank branch – and several large surface lots. With the help of a CCRFC PILOT, the applicant plans on clearing the site and building two mixed-use buildings with 270 apartments and 17,500 sq. ft. of ground floor retail, as well as a 411-space parking garage.

Project Description: This description will divide the project into two primary components:

- **Building A / Parking Garage**
The largest of the development's mixed use buildings, filling the eastern half of the block, with frontage on Union, Cleveland, and Monroe. The development's parking garage is wrapped by Building A on Monroe and Union, and only has frontage on Cleveland.
- **Building B**
The smaller of the development's mixed-use buildings, located at the southwest corner of Claybrook and Union.

Building A / Parking Garage

Building A's Union façade contains three ground-floor retail bays, which will feature modern aluminum and glass storefronts topped with aluminum canopies. The primary siding material on the ground

floor will be brick, with a base of cast stone. The retail bay on the corner of Union and Cleveland will utilize aluminum composite siding to create a distinctive effect at the corner. The four residential floors above the ground floor retail on Union utilize cementitious panels and cementitious lap siding in four colors to create visual interest and break up the façade into coherent sections. The southeast and southwest corners of the building on Union are also visually emphasized with angled parapets that extend above the building's standard roofline.

The development's frontage on Cleveland is dominated by a five story parking garage, sandwiched in between portions of Building A on the south and north ends of the block. On the south end of the block, the treatment of the corner retail bay at Union and Cleveland continues, topped with four residential floors and the extended parapet. The parking garage extends across the middle of the block, with an automobile access point on the garage's south end. The concrete garage will feature metal mesh screen panels in a geometric pattern that will help screen the garage and create visual interest. Building A continues on the north side of the block, with brick at the basement level, and five residential floors above, which will use the same materials found on the Union façade.

The north side of Building A, facing Monroe, features five stories of residential, with the same combination of cementitious panels and lap siding found on Union. The northeast and northwest corners of the building continue the pattern of accenting the corners with angled parapets, providing the building with vertical articulation.

Building B

Building B mirrors the general design patterns and materials of Building A, at a smaller scale. Like Building A, Building B features ground floor retail facing Union. However, Building B also features a large cut through on the ground floor, designed to facilitate a bank drive-through. Otherwise, materials on the ground floor are drawn from the same palette as building A: aluminum and glass storefronts, aluminum canopies, brick siding, and cast stone at the building's base. The pattern of vertical articulation is continued on building B through the use of angled parapets at the southeast and northwest corners of the building.

Staff Report:

The proposed project is located in the Commercial Corridor design context defined by the Downtown Design Guidelines. In many cases, the Design Guidelines' recommendations for a specific area focus on preserving and enhancing the existing pattern of

development. The Commercial Corridor guidelines, on the other hand, recommend that new developments should help *change* the character of their context from auto-oriented strips to walkable mixed-use neighborhoods. The URBN on Union project is a major step toward realizing the Design Guidelines' goals for Commercial Corridor areas.

In the place of two suburban-style commercial buildings surrounded by a sea of surface parking, URBN on Union will create a mixed-use urban block with residences, retail, and a new parking garage that will help facilitate the higher density. The buildings included in the new development will be built to the street, and the retail frontage on Union promises to help transition a formerly un-walkable block into an active urban streetscape

Staff Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval, with the condition of later approval for lighting and signage.**