



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

Public Art & Architectural Lighting

Case # 18-137R1:                   Wisacre Brewing Company  
0 Abel Street  
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant:                         Mr. Jason Weeks  
LRK  
175 Toyota Plaza; STE 500  
Memphis, TN 38103

Owner:                             Kellan Bartosch  
2783 Broad Ave.  
Memphis, TN 38112

Background:                     DRB review is required for this project because it received a 15-  
Year PILOT at the December 11, 2018 CCRFC Board Meeting.

On January 9, 2019 the Design Review Board approved the construction of the new 43,000 SF Wisacre production facility on vacant land located south of the intersection of South BB King Blvd. and Vance Ave.

This application addresses the separate public art and architectural lighting proposal.

Project Description:            With the new Downtown brewery, the intention is to create a sense of entering an immersive art experience alongside the thoughtful, commanding structure of the building and outdoor space that was approved by the DRB.

Artist, Rachel Briggs, and the Wisacre team have worked together on concept and branding of the company from the beginning formations to present day operations. For the past 6 years, her illustration work has since appeared on the cans and bottles of Wisacre Brewing Company. In her role with Wisacre during the past 6 years, Rachel has illustrated over fifty labels with the company and has helped build the brand into something style specific and recognizable around Memphis and within the greater American craft brew community.

Working along with LRK architects and the fabrication team of Memphis-based Youngblood Studio, Wiseacre and Rachel have planned a number of outdoor art installations that reflect the company's fun-loving nature and culture. With each detail and art piece, Wiseacre looks to bridge the gap between the playfulness of the brand with the interaction of the environment surrounding and the downtown community at large. Relying on the illustrative nature of the brewery artwork, the outdoor art installments will create a sense of mystery and intrigue, highly spirited within the space.

At night, the art pieces will also include exterior lighting to thoughtfully illuminate the pieces to create a sense of curious glow and presence.

In detail, the proposed art for the new downtown brewery includes a southward facing wall mural constructed of hand-painted dibond panels which will create a scene of wild plant life, complete with a hidden cat-like creature peeking along the roofline (a reference to Tarasque Saison) as well as a large cuckoo clock that pays homage to the Wiseacre roots of both German beer and family (a reference to Oktoberfest). The plant life will continue in smaller sprigs in other locations of the building to simulating the idea of over-growth and movement.

Lighting of the south wall will come from positioned pole lights from the beer garden that will cast a glaze and soft light to show off the dramatic features. Lights on the cuckoo clock will be incorporated in the piece, illuminating upwards to highlight the feature.

Included in the outdoor space above the main entrance will be large-scale printed dibond panels of a whimsical pattern that (derived from Wiseacre's Regular Pale Ale can), which will also serve as a geometric counterpart to the organic nature of the south wall mural art. The pattern will be modified in larger form to welcome patrons into the space. At night, the panels will be lit from above, creating an inviting glow of the entry.

On the northwest corner of the building is a proposed "Eye In The Sky" rooftop installation constructed of LED lights and painted metal, an homage to vintage neon signage and the vibrant spirit of downtown Memphis. A reference in part to Wiseacre's Ameliorator brew label, the focus of the installation will be an animated eye and celestial rays that serve as a beacon for the company as well as an art piece that creates curiosity and intrigue.

By day, the piece will live on its own in shape and color and by night it will be illuminated by LED, bringing on a second life. In

art and historical symbolism, an eye represents honesty, conscience and awareness which are part of the ethos of the company. The Eye is used throughout many other designs for Wiseacre as well, from Azazel to Adjective Animal brew labels.

The proposed design hopes to become a landmark destination within the dynamic fabric of downtown, where visitors and the community surrounding can come and immerse themselves in a very special art experience.

Public art and architectural lighting are crucial design components to the buildings character both day and night, allowing the building to embody the Wiseacre brand. Rachel Briggs, the artist who works with the Wiseacre team on designing their cans and brand specific art, will incorporate her art into the building's architectural design. This project will come to life with the integration of Rachel's art as it activates each façade and creates moments of exploration throughout the site.

Signage will be submitted with a separate application.

Staff Report:

The property is located in the Neighbor Center Design Context and is not located in a Historic District. The proposed art and architectural lighting is consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and DMC priorities of promoting creativity and designing with authenticity.

As an active brewhouse, the DRB approved the design of the proposed new construction as it looked to warehouses and industrial examples in the South Main neighborhood. However, the proposed plans also saw the opportunity to integrate art and light as critical components of the building's design.

The artist, Rachel Briggs, has created a series of pieces which meet this intent to collectively animate the building's exterior and creatively allow the building to reflect the Wiseacre Brand.

The southern elevation will include a painted mural with additional components such as a 3D cuckoo clock and additional lights built into the clock. This piece will reflect the Tarasque Saison and Oktoberfest can designs and create a dynamic entrance that will be visible from the main entrance to the brewery and the landscaped beer garden.

The western elevation includes the corner feature which will include a mural of Regular can design behind a translucent metal screen above the corner entrance. The corner will also include

illumination to designate the entrance to the brewery and enhance its presence at night.

The northern elevation will include a rooftop sign that includes an “eye” and the Wiseacre name. The sign will be illuminated with neon style LED lights and be visible from South Main St. There will be an additional corner feature which hints at the additional artwork around the corner.

Collectively, all of the proposed components effortlessly combine signage, art and light design to create a unique and bold building that embodies the Wiseacre brand. This authentic approach to all three elements forges a blend that is a signature style for Downtown.

Staff is supportive of the proposed design and believes that it will serve as an appropriate example of creative industrial design that creatively promotes vibrancy and high quality design while creating a new destination downtown.

**Staff Recommendation:** **Staff recommends approval with the condition that the applicant return with a separate application for signage.**