



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

Exterior Renovation

Case # 21-05: 151 Vance Ave.
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant / Owner: Anton Mack
151 Vance Ave.
Memphis, TN 38103

Background: DRB review is required for this project because it received a South City Good Neighbor Grant at the December 16th, 2020, CCDC meeting.

The subject property is located on the southeast corner of South Second St. and Vance Ave., two blocks east of Main Street. The site contains a 6,152 sq. ft. single story building. 151 Vance Ave. was originally built in 1940 by the 20th Century Fox Pictures Company and operated as a regional film production and distribution house for Hollywood films. The building was constructed in art moderne style over a two year period along historic Film Row (Second Street from Vance to Butler). Tri-State Theater Supply purchased the building in 1977. Century House operated as a commercial theater and stage supply business until 2004. The building was left vacant until the applicant purchased the building in 2014. Century House now operates as a minority-owned business enterprise employing numerous minority contractors, including local chefs, musicians, artists and photographers. The event space and social club features a collection of classically-styled rooms, bars, lounges, offices and a state-of-the-art screening room.

Project Description: The changes funded by the South City Good Neighbor Grant include renovations to the north, south and west facades. The scope of work includes pressure washing, tuck-point work and sealing the brick exterior with historic masonry sealer. The western façade will be painted along with the window frames, gutter spouts and light canopies. The existing windows and front door entry system will be replaced and a new metal canopy will be installed above the entrance.

The work also includes removal of outdated driveway aprons and the installation of proper drainage systems. The planting strip along Second St. will be removed from the sidewalk to allow for a consistent pathway for pedestrians that is free of litter and easily maintained. New planters will be installed on either side of the entrance along with a locally made bike rack.

Staff Report:

The South City Good Neighbor Grant aims to strengthen the character of important places within the South City community through enhancing curb appeal and the pedestrian experience. Century House is one of these important places, dually located within the boundaries of the South City Neighborhood and the CBID. The building's location along Vance Ave. provides an opportunity to connect pedestrians from the South City Neighborhood into Downtown's core and South Main.

Century House is a unique South City program application due to its historic past and art moderne style of architecture. The designs presented follow our Downtown Design Guidelines for historic structures. The proposed renovations will enhance the existing historic architecture as well as eliminate future decay and degradation. This project also supports a building that exemplifies Memphis' unique character and authenticity, a goal of the Downtown Memphis Strategic Plan.

Staff is supportive of the proposed renovations and believes that it appropriately maintains the character and history of the building, while introducing contemporary subtle features that support the pedestrian experience. This project adds to the synergy of new and exciting projects just south of Downtown's core.

Staff Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval.**