Victorian Village Redevelopment Plan

District Overview
Current Conditions
District-Wide Recommendations
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District Overview

Victorian Village is a historic district that lies between the Downtown Core and the Medical District. The district is bounded by Manassas, Danny Thomas, Poplar and Madison.

Included in the district are several grand Victorian homes within a two-block area that date back to mid-to-late 19th century. When built, this stretch of French Second Empire and Italianate Victorian architecture was known as “Millionaire’s Row”, serving as homes to several wealthy cotton merchants. Several of these homes have been turned into museums.

The rest of the district is characterized by governmental institutions and maintenance facilities as well as multi-family residential complexes. Two parks, Victorian Village Park and Morris Park, are included within the district.

The Regional Medical Center of Memphis, LeBonheur Children’s Hospital, and UT Medical Campus facilities are adjacent to the Victorian Village neighborhood on the east.

The study area is also part of a larger area known as the BioWorks Medical District. The Memphis BioWorks Foundation is the community leader and financial manager for a ten-year, $500 million redevelopment and expansion of the medical research industry for the Memphis Central Medical District. The mission of the Memphis BioWorks Foundation is to establish the Memphis region as an internationally recognized center for the development and commercialization of biomedical technology.

The museums, surrounding medical institutions, and popular district restaurants serve as a draw to tourists and Memphians. However, poor streetscape and infrastructure, incompatible land uses, and underserviced public spaces create the perception that the area is unsafe and, in some cases, unattractive.

In early 2004, residents, business owners and land owners from the Victorian Village District, along with governmental officials, gathered to discuss the future of this area and to craft a vision for future development.

This Redevelopment Plan addresses specific recommendations for the area.
1 The Urban Child Institute
The former Blue Cross/Blue Shield Building is being renovated into offices for the University of Memphis and University of Tennessee’s Urban Affairs departments as well as the Child Advocacy agencies.

2 Morris Park
A 4.5 acre community park with playground equipment, pavilions, and basketball courts.

3 Victorian Village Park
Less than an acre in need of infrastructure improvements.

4 Shelby County Juvenile Court

5 Collins Chapel CME
Historic Methodist Church was established on this site in 1859.

6 Victorian Village Historic Homes:

a Mallory-Neely House
circa 1852. Closed temporarily.

b Woodruff-Fontaine
circa 1870. Open for public tours.

c James Lee House
circa 1869. Closed due to poor structural conditions.

d Lowenstein Mansion
circa 1891. Closed due to poor structural conditions.

e Massey House
Closed due to poor structural conditions.

f Memphis City Beautiful
Renovated office.
Land Use
The area is comprised of mixed-uses with most residential and institutional. Residential uses include Victorian style homes and multi-family apartments along Jefferson and Adams.

Institutional facilities include:
- Shelby County Juvenile Court;
- Memphis Housing Authority;
- University of Tennessee Campus;
- Shelby County Maintenance Facility;
- City of Memphis Fire Maintenance Facility;
- and the Shelby County Vehicle Inspection Center.

There are two parks in the area - Morris Park and Victorian Village Park. Morris Park is a 4.5 acre community park with playground equipment, pavilions, and basketball courts. The Victorian Village Park is less than an acre with very few amenities for visitors.

Unique to the neighborhood are the historic Victorian-style houses that are owned by the city. Tours are given in the Mallory-Nelly House and the Woodruff Fontaine House. However, the Lowenstein Mansion, James Lee House, Approximately 2.3 acres of land are vacant in this neighborhood.

Zoning Classifications

Multiple Dwelling Residential (R-MH)
All types of residential uses are allowed except mobile homes. Churches, schools and Institutions are permitted in this zone subject to site plan approval. Commercial uses are prohibited. There is no maximum height restrictions on multifamily dwellings in this zone.

Multiple Dwelling Residential (R-MM)
All types of residential uses are allowed except mobile homes. Churches, schools, and Institutions are permitted in this zone subject to site plan approval. Commercial uses are prohibited. There is a 125 ft maximum height restriction on multifamily dwellings in this zone.

Central Business District (CBD)
CBD zoning allows for all types of residential uses, retail uses, hotels, offices, schools, etc. There are no height restrictions or maximum density requirements for this zoning district.

Hospital (H)
Uses permitted in the Hospital zone are offices, hospitals, and residential units with special provisions. There is a 125 ft height restriction for this zone.
Development Recommendations

Redevelopment Recommendations

The following redevelopment recommendations for the Victorian Village District are based on feedback received from area stakeholders in conjunction with guidelines established by professional urban planners and designers.

1. Celebrate museum houses by restoring those in disrepair and surrounding them with houses of compatible scale and architectural character.

2. Connect museum houses on Adams to Jefferson by creating a green boulevard/park that runs the length of the block.

3. Maintain the historic integrity of museum houses by incorporating infill houses of a compatible character and scale along Adams and Jefferson, including single family, duplex or triplex buildings that appear like large mansions.

4. Redevelop the east parcel of the Edison Apartments and line it with three- and four-story residential to create a better connection between Court and Jefferson.

5. Create higher density loft-style multi-family along Madison where the trolley line connects Downtown to the Medical Center/Midtown.

6. Build upon the Juvenile Court parking lot by filling the gap along Poplar with retail or residential. Consolidate parking in a parking structure while maintaining a direct connection to the court.

7. Develop three-story rental apartments along Poplar that are situated around courtyards.


9. Encourage the city and county to redevelop its industrial land into higher and better uses with appropriate screening of parking facing Poplar or Adams.

10. Redevelop property along Danny Thomas for commercial or office uses.

11. Encourage development of University of Tennessee land near Monroe and Manassas with parking on the interior of the block and buildings addressing the street in an urbane manner.

12. Renovate Victorian Village Park between Adams and Jefferson with its focus towards Juvenile Court. Surround the park with homes and “eyes on the green” creating a visual connection to Jefferson. The park should accommodate public functions that support museum activities.

13. Reconfigure the size of Morris Park to create a safe and attractive environment surrounded by passive surveillance. Focus the park on the CME Church and St. Mary’s Cathedral.

14. Extend Morris Park along Orleans Street to Adams, connecting the park to the public institutions along Adams.

15. Build new “mansion-style” offices along Jefferson and Orleans that complement existing buildings.

16. Redevelop the west four-acre parcel of the Edison Apartments site for commercial retail use. This would be an ideal location for a much needed downtown grocer.
New Streets
To provide better traffic flow, new roads are proposed that would break up large blocks. These new north-south and east-west corridors would also improve development opportunities on the blocks.

Neely should be extended from Madison to Jefferson, creating a north-south connection from Adams to Madison.

Two new streets would connect Poplar and Adams and another road would connect Poplar to Washington.

To break up the large block between Jefferson and Monroe, Court and Neely would be extended and a new road would connect Jefferson to Monroe. Another new road would connect Jefferson to Court.

Streetscape Improvements
To create pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, traffic taming devices should be created, like narrowed traffic lanes and medians should be added or expanded. Pedestrian islands or curb bumpouts at corners should be installed for safety.

General streetscape should be addressed, including repairing or replacing sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting, new street trees, and site furniture.

Bicycle lanes that are a part of the county-wide trail plan should be incorporated.
Site 1

An apartment complex c. 1955 on this site consists of two buildings facing Adams on either side of Cielo’s Restaurant. This property is currently for sale.

Recommendation:
A ten unit townhouse development in the Victorian style with a 20’ front setback and parking in the rear.

Property Owner: Crews Investment Property

Site 2

This site includes a 3.5-acre surface parking lot that should service a higher and better use. This surface lot is currently used by Shelby County Juvenile Court.

Recommendation:
Multi-family housing fronting Poplar and Washington.

Property Owner: Shelby County Government
Site 3

The Salvation Army and the Memphis Fire Maintenance facility occupy this 4.5-acre block. Both establishments have expressed an interest in relocating.

Recommendation:
This block would be ideal for a mix of commercial, institutional, single-family and multi-family uses.

Property Owner: Salvation Army and the City of Memphis

Site 4

This 3.6 acre site is occupied by the Shelby County Maintenance facilities, Crime Victim's Center, and High Gear Sales and Manufacturing.

Recommendation:
Multi-family and single-family residential units are recommended for this site. A new road that would run from Poplar to Adams along the east side of the site should be considered. The road would create a buffer between new residential development and Juvenile Court.

Property Owners: Shelby County Government and
Site 5
The Memphis Housing Authority offices currently occupy this 1.6-acre site located on the east side of Orleans between Washington and Adams.

Recommendation:
Redevelopment of this building into commercial and residential mixed-use would be ideal to compliment the multi-family structures and museum homes surrounding the site.

Property Owner: Memphis Housing Authority

Site 6
Mid-South Bonding and Tenent Laboratories occupy this highly visible 1.6-acre site.

Recommendation:
Commercial office and retail uses should be considered along Danny Thomas and institutional uses would be best fronting Adams. Parking for new uses should be situated on the east side of the property.

Property Owners: Fred Esco, Jr. (Mid-South Bonding) and Woodson-Treat Lab, Inc.
Site 7

This 15.4-acre site is occupied by The Edison, a 312-unit apartment complex.

Recommendation:
To improve road connectivity, new roads should be cut through this large block. Court should be extended from Danny Thomas to Manassas. Neely should be extended to connect Madison to Jefferson. Two additional north-south roads should also be considered. Redevelopment should include commercial uses along Danny Thomas and three and four-story multi-family and single-family residential units on the east portion of the site.

Property Owners: City of Memphis and Edison Park, LTD

Site 8

This 2-acre site is occupied by University of Tennessee campus police and Shelby County Training and Convention Center

Recommendation:
This site is ideal for medical-related offices or instructional centers. Additional parking will be required to support these uses.

Property Owners: University of Tennessee and Shelby County
Site 9

Currently there are 30 acres of surface parking on this 4.5-acre site. Facilities associated with the University of Tennessee campus are located along Court. Retail shops front Madison.

Recommendation:
To compliment proposed medical-related development on Site 7, medical-related uses are proposed for this site as well.

Property Owners:
Tennessee Baptist Church,
University of Tennessee,
Martin Faulkner,
Downtown Memphis Ministries.

Site 10

There is currently an ICB Discount Outlet Store on this site that is on the market.

Recommendation:
Six single-family homes in the Italianate style.

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