
COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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STAFF REPORT DESIGN COMMISSION STUDY SESSION

Project No:	DSR24-005
Description:	A Study Session with the Design Commission to discuss the repainting of five separate existing buildings that are suffering from discoloration, peeling, flaking, and general aging.
Applicant/ Owner:	Dustin Miller (United Dominion Realty, Inc.)
Site Address:	2758 78th Avenue SE, Mercer Island WA 98040 King County Assessor tax parcel number: 531510124
Zoning District	Town Center, Subarea 4 (TC-4)
Staff Contact:	Molly McGuire, Planner
Exhibits:	1. Project Narrative 2. Plan Set

I. INTRODUCTION

On April 9, 2024, the applicant applied for a study session with the Design Commission to review a proposal to paint the Island Square Apartments, which are comprised of five separate buildings connected by a street level and subterranean parking garage, and a second level podium deck. The scope includes the removal of all discolored, peeling, flaking, and aging paint. The existing materials on the five subject buildings would not be modified or altered. The proposal would enhance the property's external appearance by painting and changing the color on significant portions of the elevations. Applicants for Design Commission Design Review are required to take part in a study session with the Design Commission prior to public hearing pursuant to MICC 19.15.220(C)(2)(a); this study session fulfills this requirement.

The subject property is located at 2758 78th Avenue SE, in the Town Center, Subarea 4 (TC-4) zone. The neighboring properties are also within the Town Center zone.

The subject property is developed with the existing Island Square Apartments. Neighboring development includes Chase Bank to the east, and mixed use to the west.

The Applicant will need to submit a formal design review application for proposed development, which will require approval by the Design Commission prior to issuance of any construction permits. Following completion of this study session and receipt of an application for design review, an open record public hearing in front of the Design Commission will be scheduled pursuant to MICC 19.15.220(C)(2).

II. STAFF ANALYSIS AND CRITERIA FOR REVIEW

A. MICC 19.15.220 – Design review and the design commission.

The code official has determined that this application shall require design commission review and approval pursuant to MICC 19.15.220(C)(1)(c)(ii).

B. MICC 19.11.010 – General.

Design vision.

The development and design standards that follow are intended to enhance the Town Center for pedestrians and develop a sense of place. To accomplish this vision, new or redevelopment is encouraged to orient buildings toward the public right-of-way with buildings brought forward to the sidewalk or landscaped edge; parking placed behind buildings and in less visible areas or underground; design structures with varied mass and scale, modulation of heights and wall planes; and pedestrian through-block connections that will break up very large or long blocks for improved pedestrian circulation from one side of the block through to the other side.

The design of buildings, structures and streetscapes within the Town Center is intended to support a built environment that is convenient and accessible to pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists and public transit users. Development should enhance the Town Center as a vibrant, healthy, mixed use downtown that serves as the city's retail, business, social, cultural and entertainment center and ensures the commercial and economic vitality of the area. New or redevelopment should increase the attractions and pedestrian amenities that bring residents to the Town Center, including local shopping, services, offices, specialty retail, restaurants, residences, festivals, special events, and entertainment. Outdoor spaces should function as social settings for a variety of experiences, adding to the comfort of life in Mercer Island, while maintaining a human scale and an ability for easy pedestrian circulation.

New or redevelopment should include public amenities, such as storefronts with canopies, street trees, greenery, seating, fountains or water features, outdoor cafes, sculpture or other forms of art, and places for gathering and lingering. The use of materials, color, texture, form and massing, proportion, public amenities, mitigation of environmental impacts, landscaping and vegetation, and architectural detail should be incorporated in the design of new or redevelopment with the purpose of supporting a human scale, pedestrian-oriented Town Center. New or redevelopment shall be coordinated and consistent with the downtown street standards.

Pedestrian-oriented and customer intensive retail businesses and offices are encouraged to locate on the street level to promote active use of sidewalks by pedestrians, thus increasing the activity level and economic viability of the Town Center. New or redevelopment should also enhance and support a range of transportation choices and be designed to maximize opportunities for alternative modes of transportation and maintain individual mobility. Even with a healthy variety of development in the Town Center, each individual development or redevelopment project shall favor the pedestrian over the automobile in terms of site design, building placement and parking locations.

Scale.

The design of all structures shall consider how the structure and site development will be viewed from the street and adjacent properties. Scale is not simply the size of the buildings, it is the proportion of buildings in relationship to each other, to the street and to the pedestrian environment.

Form.

Building forms shall not present visual mass impacts that are out of proportion to the adjoining structures, or that appear from the street or sidewalk as having unmodulated visual mass. Building additions should complement the original structure in design.

Style.

The objectives and standards do not set or encourage a particular style of architecture or design theme. However, building and site design shall be pedestrian in scale and address design features such as sloped roof

lines; distinctive building shapes; integration of art, textures, and patterns; treatment of pedestrian and public spaces; interface with the public right-of-way; landscaping; signage and facade treatments.

C. MICC 19.11.015 – Town Center subareas.

The subject property is located within the TC-4 subarea, which is to be a transition between the taller buildings in the TC-5 subarea and the lower structures in the TC-3 and TCMF-3 subareas. A broad mix of land uses is allowed. Buildings may be up to four stories in height.

The proposed development does not alter the height of the existing buildings.

D. MICC 19.11.110 – Materials and color.

Objectives.

Textured high quality materials and colors should bring a visually interesting experience into the streetscape. Color should be carefully considered in relation to the overall design of the building and surrounding buildings. Color and materials should highlight architectural elements such as doors, windows, fascias, cornices, lintels, and sills. Variations in materials and colors should be generally limited to what is required for contrast or to accentuate architectural features. Piecemeal embellishment and frequent changes in materials should be avoided. The materials and colors selected should be consistent with the intent, purpose and vision set forth in MICC 19.11.010.

The proposed colors are high quality and are intended to enhance the property's external appearance. The proposed color palette was selected to modernize the appearance, while complimenting existing elements of the building and the surrounding Town Center. The proposed paint scheme highlights existing architectural elements.

Development and design standards.

1. ***Building exteriors.*** The applicant is responsible for demonstrating that the proposed design includes colors that weather well and that building exteriors need minimal maintenance. The scope of work does not include changes to the existing materials.
2. ***Regional focus.*** The proposed paint palette was selected to modernize the appearance, while complimenting existing elements of the building and the surrounding Town Center.
3. ***Attention to all sides.*** The proposed paint scheme includes painting the entire buildings in a consistent manner to the example facades shown in the plan set.
4. ***Concrete walls.*** The proposed scope of work does not include changes to the existing materials.
5. ***Harmonious range of colors.*** The proposed color palette was selected to modernize the appearance, while complimenting existing elements of the building and the surrounding Town Center. The proposed color palette does not include neon or very bright colors.
6. ***Bright colors.*** The proposed color palette does not include bright colors.
7. ***Undesired materials.*** The proposed scope of work does not include changes to the existing materials.
8. ***Variation of materials.*** The proposed scope of work does not include changes to the existing materials.

E. MICC 19.11.150 – Administration.

Design review.

1. ***Authority.*** Design review shall be conducted by the city's design commission or code official consistent with the procedure set forth in MICC 19.15.220(C). The design commission or the code

official shall review the applicability of the development and design standards and determine the project's conformance with this chapter. The degree of conformance with all of the development and design standards will vary on a project-by-project basis. The design commission shall review each project on the project's degree of overall conformity with the objectives, standards and the comprehensive plan. The design commission or the code official has the authority to approve, approve with conditions, or deny projects based on the criteria set forth in MICC 19.15.220(C).

2. ***Applicant's responsibility.*** It is the responsibility of the applicant to design a project in compliance with the objectives and development and design standards of this chapter.
3. ***Shall/should.*** When a standard uses the word "shall," the standard is mandatory. When a standard uses the word "should," the standard is mandatory unless the applicant can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the design commission, an equal or better means of satisfying the standard and objective.
4. ***Development agreements.*** An applicant may request modifications to any development and design standards set forth in this chapter by requesting a development agreement consistent with RCW 36.70B.170 through 36.70B.210. All development agreements shall be in form and content acceptable to the city attorney and shall be reviewed and either approved or rejected by the city council after a public hearing pursuant to RCW 36.70B.200.
5. ***Changes of use and tenant improvements.*** It is the property owners' and tenants' responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable development regulations when a change of use and/or a tenant improvement occurs.

III. RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommended motion at this time, as this is a Design Commission study session.