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# CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

## COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

9611 SE 36TH STREET | MERCER ISLAND, WA 98040

PHONE: 206.275.7605 | [www.mercergov.org](http://www.mercergov.org)



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## STAFF REPORT

### DESIGN COMMISSION STUDY SESSION

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<b>Project No:</b>	DSR20-005
<b>Description:</b>	Mercer Park office building renovation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Renovating the east building facade;</li><li>2. Modifying the front entry and plaza; and,</li><li>3. Renovating the third floor roof to create an outdoor deck area.</li></ol>
<b>Applicant/ Owner:</b>	Mercer Park South, LLC (c/o Marc Gearhart)
<b>Site Address:</b>	3003 77 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SE (Parcel Number 531510-1015)
<b>Zoning District:</b>	Town Center (TC)
<b>Staff Contact:</b>	Evan Maxim, Director of Community Planning & Development
<b>Exhibits:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Project Narrative by Burgess Design, dated June 8, 2020</li><li>2. Mercer Park Conceptual Plans, by Burgess Design, dated June 29, 2020</li><li>3. Arborist report by Urban Forestry Services, dated May 13, 2020</li></ol>

#### INTRODUCTION

The applicant has applied for a study session with the Design Commission in order to obtain guidance on portions of the relevant design standards (MICC Section 19.11 – Town Center Development and Design Standards). This study session also fulfills the requirement in MICC 19.15.220(C)(2)(a) to meet with the Design Commission in a study session prior to a decision.

The subject site is located at 3003 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, in the TC zone. The site slopes downward from west to east. The site is currently developed with an existing office building, formerly known as the Farmers Insurance building, and associated parking. The property to the west of the subject property is zoned as multifamily (MF-2) and is developed with townhomes (Trellis). The property to the south of the subject property is zoned Public Institution (PI) and is developed with the Recycling Center, Bicentennial Park, and Mercerdale Park. The property to the north and east of the subject property is zoned Town Center (TC) and is developed with commercial buildings.

This project will require design review and 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).

## STAFF ANALYSIS AND CRITERIA FOR REVIEW

1. East Building Façade renovation: The applicant is proposing to renovate the East Building Façade as follows (Exhibit 1: Project Narrative):
  - a. Removing the landscaped berm between 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and the building, and installing new windows to bring daylight into the lower level;
  - b. Installing new landscaping on the re-graded area. Landscaping will consist of paved pedestrian areas along the frontage to support the Farmer’s market and pedestrian activity, and softscape landscaping consisting of ornamental and native plants; and,
  - c. Painting the existing wood screen and installing lighting around the pedestrian benches.

### Staff analysis:

The Town Center Design Vision is established in MICC 19.11.010(D). Redevelopment should orient buildings towards the public right of way, increase pedestrian amenities, and create public amenities such as outdoor seating, spaces for art and public gatherings. The proposed renovation along the 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE appears is consistent with the Town Center Design Vision for redevelopment.

Landscaping standards are listed in MICC 19.11.070. The applicant is not proposing to change the amount of landscaped area; the project scope is a revision to existing landscaped areas. MICC 19.11.070(B)(2)(b) requires that existing prominent trees be retained to the extent feasible. The applicant has proposed to remove four existing trees along the east building façade to allow for excavation to both install drainage improvements and modify the building façade to allow daylight into the lowest level of the building (Exhibit 2: Mercer Park Conceptual Plans, pages 7-8). The applicant does intend to retain the existing street trees. The conceptual landscaping plan (Exhibit 2: Mercer Park Conceptual Plans, pages 3-5 and 7-8) appears to be consistent with the provisions of 19.11.070.

Lighting standards are established in MICC 19.11.090. Lighting should be designed to be pedestrian scale, LED or low wattage, natural lighting, and integrated into the overall design. The proposed renovation provides for pedestrian scale lighting around the proposed public amenities along 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and appears to be consistent with the provisions of 19.11.090.

Building design standards are established in MICC 19.11.100. The standards in MICC 19.11.100 do not, for the most part, apply to this building renovation because the renovation is not “Major New Construction”. However, the proposed building façade renovation does include the provision of additional fenestration along 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, which is generally consistent with MICC 19.11.100(B)(1)(b).

Materials and color standards are established in MICC 19.11.110. Building exteriors should use high quality materials, use a cohesive color palette around the building, provide for a variation in materials, and use bright colors only for trim or accent areas. The proposed color palette and material design associated with the renovation (Exhibit 2: Mercer Park Conceptual Plans, pages 6 and 10) is consistent with MICC 19.11.110.

2. Front Entry and Plaza renovation: The applicant is proposing to renovate the Front Entry and Plaza as follows (Exhibit 1: Project Narrative):
  - a. Modifying the main entry of the building;
  - b. New landscaping and bench seating areas in the plaza and relocating the public art; and,
  - c. Painting the existing wood screen.

**Staff analysis:**

Landscaping standards are listed in MICC 19.11.070. The applicant is not proposing to change the amount of landscaped area; the project scope is a revision to existing landscaped areas.

Building design standards are established in MICC 19.11.100. The standards in MICC 19.11.100 do not, for the most part, apply to this building renovation because the renovation is not “Major New Construction”. However, MICC 19.11.100 requires that building entrances should be concentrated along the sidewalk, and should be physically and visually inviting.

Materials and color standards are established in MICC 19.11.110. Building exteriors should use high quality materials, use a cohesive color palette around the building, provide for a variation in materials, and use bright colors only for trim or accent areas. The proposed color palette and material design associated with the renovation (Exhibit 2: Mercer Park Conceptual Plans, pages 6 and 10) is consistent with MICC 19.11.110.

3. Outdoor roof deck area: The applicant is proposing to renovate the roof of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor to provide an outdoor roof deck accessible from the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, as follows (Exhibit 1: Project Narrative):
  - a. Removing an existing screen along the 4<sup>th</sup> floor façade;
  - b. Adding a new deck paver system over a portion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor roof;
  - c. Creating a landscaped area over a portion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor roof; and,
  - d. Adding secondary stair access from the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor to the roof deck area.

**Staff analysis:**

The existing screen wall along the 4<sup>th</sup> floor façade appears to be located approximately 75 feet from the eastern parapet wall associated with the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. The existing screen wall does not appear to be visible from adjacent property to the east or south of the subject site and does not appear to be required by the Town Center code. Materials and color standards are established in MICC 19.11.110. Building exteriors should use high quality materials, use a cohesive color palette around the building, provide for a variation in materials, and use bright colors only for trim or accent areas. The proposed color palette associated with the renovation (Exhibit 2: Mercer Park Conceptual Plans, pages 6 and 10) is consistent with MICC 19.11.110.

The creation of the additional rooftop landscaping and outdoor deck paver system is consistent with MICC 19.11.070. Outdoor furniture and fixtures should be compatible with the project architecture. The additional landscaping on the roof appears to qualify as a “green roof” pursuant to MICC 19.11.070(B)(1)(b) and represents a net increase in landscaping on the subject site. The proposed outdoor deck paver and rooftop landscaping appears to be consistent with MICC 19.11.070.

The proposed “dog house” providing stair access to the rooftop deck area is a rooftop appurtenance located more than 10 feet to the west of the existing eastern parapet wall (Exhibit 2: Mercer Park Conceptual Plans, pages 12 and 13). Pursuant to MICC 19.11.030(A)(5), rooftop appurtenances are generally discouraged except where there is a functional need for the appurtenance. The proposed stair access is necessary to allow for the safe use of the rooftop deck area, which is a functional need. The proposed rooftop appurtenance appears to be screened by the existing parapet walls on the east and south sides of the building. The proposed stairway dog house rooftop appurtenance generally appears to be consistent with MICC 19.11.030, although additional detail during design review will be required to

ensure the rooftop appurtenance does not exceed the 10 foot height limit and is fully screened along the southern façade exposure.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

There is no recommendation; this staff report has been prepared for a study session.