
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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STAFF REPORT

DESIGN COMMISSION DESIGN REVIEW

Project No.:	DSR20-006
Description:	Mercer Park office building renovation: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Renovating the east building façade;2. Modifying the main entry and plaza; and,3. Creating roof deck enhancements.
Applicant/ Owner:	Mercer Park South, LLC (c/o Marc Gearhart)
Site Address:	3003 77 th Avenue SE (Parcel Number 531510-1015)
Zoning District	Town Center (TC)
Staff Contact:	Robin Proebsting, Senior Planner
Exhibits:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Project Narrative by Burgess Design, dated June 8, 20202. Plan set prepared by Burgess Design, dated October 30, 20203. Development Application, dated June 1, 20204. Notice of Application, dated July 13, 20205. Notice of Public Hearing, dated November 9, 2020

INTRODUCTION

I. Project Description

The applicant has applied for Design Commission Design Review approval for proposed exterior alterations to an existing office building in the Town Center zone. The relevant design standards are MICC Chapter 19.11 – Town Center Development and Design Standards.

II. Site Description and Context

The subject site is located at 3003 77th 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.

FINDINGS OF FACT & CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

III. Application Procedure

1. The application for Design Commission Design Review approval was submitted on June 9, 2020 (Exhibit 3).
2. A notice of application was issued on July 13, 2020 and the 30-day comment period took place between July 13, 2020 and August 12, 2020 (Exhibit 4).
3. No public comment was received during project review.
4. A notice of public hearing was issued on November 9, 2020 (Exhibit 5).
5. MICC 19.15.030 establishes Design Commission Design Review as a Type IV land use review, for which the decision authority is the Design Commission.

IV. State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Compliance

6. The proposal is exempt from SEPA Review pursuant to WAC 197-11-800(1).

V. Consistency with Design Standards

7. East Building Façade renovation: The applicant is proposing to renovate the East Building Façade as follows (Exhibit 1):
 - a. Removing the landscaped berm between 77th 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.

Applicable code standards include:

- *MICC 19.11.090(B)(1), (3) and (7) – Lighting*
 - *Pedestrian-scale light fixtures should be incorporated into the site design to give visual variety from one building to the next and should blend with the architectural style.*
 - *All building entrances should be well lit to provide inviting access and safety.*
 - *All lighting fixtures should be shielded or located to confine light spread within the site boundaries, to the extent possible, especially when adjacent to residential uses.*

Staff analysis: A series of bollards are proposed on the east façade, which will light the pedestrian walkway (Exhibit 2, page 4). The proposed bollard design will aim light downward, lighting pathways to promote safety while avoiding glare and light trespass (Exhibit 2, page 11).

- *MICC 19.11.110 - Materials and color*
 - *1. Building Exteriors. Building exteriors should be constructed from high quality and durable materials. It is important that the materials and colors weather well and that building exteriors need minimal maintenance.*
 - *2. Regional Focus. Materials and colors should reflect the city's regional setting.*

- 3. *Attention to All Sides. Materials and colors should be used with cohesiveness and compatibility on all sides of a building.*
- 4. *Concrete Walls. Concrete walls should be architecturally treated. The treatment may include textured concrete such as exposed aggregate, sand blasting, stamping or color coating.*
- 5. *Harmonious Range of Colors. A harmonious range of colors should be used within the Town Center. Neon or very bright colors, which have the effect of unreasonably setting the building apart from other adjacent buildings on the street, should not be used.*
- 6. *Bright Colors. Bright colors should be used only for trim and accents if the use is consistent with the building design and other design requirements.*
- 7. *Undesired Materials. Beveled metal siding, mirrored glass, and vinyl siding should not be used. EIFS, stucco and similar materials should be limited to use as a minor building facade element.*
- 8. *Variation of Materials. A variation of building materials should be used to assist in the creation of a visually interesting experience.*

Staff analysis: The existing exterior building façade and screening walls are proposed to be painted in a muted, harmonious palette; no bright colors are proposed, and consistent, harmonious colors will be used on all sides of the building. None of the materials listed as undesired in the code are proposed to be added to the building. A variety of materials, including wood and glazing, are proposed to be used on the façade (Exhibit 2, p. 10).

- 8. Front Entry and Plaza renovation: The applicant is proposing to renovate the Front Entry and Plaza as follows (Exhibit 1: Project Narrative):
 - d. Painting the existing wood screen
 - e. Modifying main entry via the following:
 - i. Removing the existing screen and changing the color of the main entry block
 - ii. Adding a new curtain wall glazing system and overhead door at entrance
 - iii. Adding new landscaping and bench seating areas in plaza
 - iv. Installing (8) new trees in the plaza area

Applicable code standards include:

- **MICC 19.11.070(B)(5) and (6) - Greenery and outdoor spaces**
 - *Building Entries. Building entries should be emphasized with special landscaping and/or paving in combination with lighting.*
 - *Building Facades. Building facade modulation and setbacks should include features such as courtyards, fountains and/or landscaping.*
- **MICC 19.11.100(B)(6) - Building Design**
 - *Building entrances should concentrate along the sidewalk and should be physically and visually inviting. Entrance doors shall be recessed from the facade surface to emphasize the entrance and provide a sheltered transition to the interior of the building. Special paving treatments and/or landscaping should be used to enhance the entrance. Pedestrian walkways with wheelchair ramps at least eight feet wide should be constructed between the sidewalk and building entrances.*

Staff analysis: Landscape beds are proposed to be placed on either side of each entry door in response to Design Commission feedback from the study session for this project (Exhibit 2, page 9). The building façade is distinguished by a modulated façade viewed from on the northeast aspect, together with contrasting colors on the building exterior and glazing at the entrance lobby (Exhibit 2, page 10).

9. Outdoor roof deck area: The applicant is proposing to renovate the 3rd floor roof to provide an outdoor roof deck, as follows (Exhibit 1: Project Narrative):
 - f. Remove existing screen
 - g. Add a new deck paver system at the 4th Floor level over a portion of the existing 3rd floor roof which was originally designed as a deck area.
 - h. Add a new stair penthouse over the existing stair to accommodate the added occupant load for the 4th floor.

Applicable code standards include:

- *MICC 19.11.030(A)(5) – Rooftop Appurtenances. Rooftop appurtenances are discouraged. If necessary, rooftop appurtenances may extend up to 10 feet above the maximum building height allowed, provided there is a functional need for the appurtenance and that functional need cannot be met with an appurtenance of a lesser height. This provision shall not be construed to allow building height in excess of the maximum limit. Rooftop appurtenances should be located at least 10 feet from the exterior edge of any building, and together with the screening provided for below, shall not cover more than 20 percent of the rooftop area.*

Staff Analysis:

The rooftop appurtenance (dog house) is proposed to be 10 feet above the existing building height, consistent with this standard (Exhibit 2, page 15). The dog house is proposed to be located far enough from the exterior edge of the building to limit visibility to a person standing 30 feet away from the building, and together with existing oak tree on the south side providing screening, will be minimally visible to passersby on the street level (Exhibit 2, page 15). The dog house is a small percentage of roof area, less than 20% of the rooftop area (Exhibit 2, page 2.)

- *MICC 19.11.110(B)(3) Attention to All Sides. Materials and colors should be used with cohesiveness and compatibility on all sides of a building.*

Staff Analysis:

1. The materials on the doghouse will match that on the building, and the parapet guard rail will not be visible at the perimeter edge, consistent with this standard (Exhibit 2, page 15).

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the above noted Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law included herein, staff recommends to the Design Commission the following:

Recommended Motion: Move to grant Mercer Park South, LLC design review approval for the proposed exterior modifications to the building located at 3003 77th Avenue SE, as shown in Exhibit 2, subject to the following conditions.

Alternative Recommended Motion: Move to grant Mercer Park South, LLC design review approval for the proposed exterior modifications to the building located at 3003 77th Avenue SE, as shown in Exhibit 2 subject to the following conditions, and further conditioned as follows.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. All aspects of the proposed development shall be in substantial conformance with the detail information submitted with this application (i.e. elevations, perspective drawings, colors, materials, font, size of sign lettering and relationship and layout of the approved wording and graphics), as depicted by Exhibit 2.
2. If a building permit is required and the applicant has not submitted a complete application for a building permit within three years from the date of this notice, or within two years from the decision on appeal from the final design review decision, design review approval shall expire.