
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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STAFF REPORT

DESIGN COMMISSION STUDY SESSION

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| Project No: | DSR23-014 |
| Description: | A Study Session with the Design Commission to discuss a proposal to repair and remediate the Monaco Villa Condominiums. The scope includes the removal of all damaged and failing existing siding at the north, east, and south elevations. The architectural massing would also be improved as part of the repair. |
| Applicant/ Owner: | James Ramil and Tess Cleary (Evolution Architecture) / Joe Peloso (Monaco Villa Condominiums Property Manager) |
| Site Address: | 2929 76th Ave SE, Mercer Island WA 98040 Identified by King County Assessor tax parcel number: 5569600000 |
| Zoning District | Multiple Family (MF-2) |
| Staff Contact: | Molly McGuire, Planner |
| Exhibits: | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Project Narrative2. Plan Set3. Building Study Session Comments |

I. INTRODUCTION:

On November 28, 2023, the applicant applied for a study session with the Design Commission to review a proposal to repair and remediate the Monaco Villa Condominiums. The scope includes the removal of all damaged and failing existing siding at the north, east, and south elevations. The architectural massing would also be improved as part of the repair. 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 2929 76th Ave SE, in the Multiple Family (MF-2) zone. The neighboring properties to the north, south, and east are also within Multiple Family (MF-2) zone. The neighboring properties to the west are within the Single Family Residential (R-9.6) zone.

The subject property is developed with the existing Monaco Villa Condominiums. Neighboring development includes additional condominiums to the east and west, and multi-story apartment buildings to the south.

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 19.03.010 – Multiple-family.

Pursuant to MICC 19.03.010(A)(1), any development within the MF-2L or MF-2 zones shall comply with chapter 19.12 MICC, Design standards for zones outside Town Center.

Pursuant to MICC 19.03.010(C)(2), the existing use as multiple-family dwellings is an allowed use within the MF-2 zone.

MICC 19.03.010(E) contains height limits for buildings within the MF-2 zone. No building shall exceed 36 feet or three stories in height, whichever is less, except appurtenances may extend to a maximum of five feet above the height allowed for the main structure. The proposed development does not include any changes to the height of the existing building, which is five stories tall.

B. MICC 19.12.010 – General.

Design vision.

Non-Town Center areas are largely characterized by residential settings that are heavily vegetated, topographically diverse and enhanced with short and long-range views that are often territorial in nature. The design of new and remodeled structures should respond to this strong environmental context. Site design should maintain the natural character of the island and preserve vegetation concentrations, topography and the view opportunities that make Mercer Island special.

Development of new and remodeled structures should conserve Mercer Island's special environmental characteristics, such as steep slopes, watercourses, and large concentrations of mature trees. Buildings shall be designed to be architecturally compatible with other structures in the neighborhood with respect to human scale, form and massing, and relationship to natural site features. High quality and durable materials, complementary colors, texture, and architectural detail should be incorporated into the design. Use of materials such as natural wood and stone, and design elements such as large building overhangs and window exposure to natural light, are encouraged.

Landscaping should reflect the natural wooded character of Mercer Island and provide visual separation between different land uses. Amenities such as street trees, plantings, and other landscape design elements, including fountains or water features, and art features should be integrated into new and remodeled structures and their sites.

Design review process.

For full application of design requirements, all design requirements of [chapter 19.12](#) MICC shall apply, except as provided in MICC [19.01.050\(D\)\(3\)\(a\)](#), when there is new construction from bare ground, or intentional exterior alteration or enlargement of a structure over any three-year period that incurs construction costs in excess of 50 percent of the existing structure's current King County assessed value as of the time the initial application for such work is submitted; provided, application of [chapter 19.12](#) MICC shall not be construed to require an existing structure to be demolished or relocated, or any portion of an existing structure that is otherwise not being worked on as part of the construction to be altered or modified.

For partial application of design requirements, the following design requirements shall apply when there is a minor exterior modification, as defined in MICC 19.16.010.

- MICC 19.12.030 pertaining to building design and visual interest;
- MICC 19.12.040(B)(5), (6), (7), (8), (9), and (11) pertaining to landscape design and outdoor spaces: entrance landscaping; planting types; screen types and widths by use and location; perimeter

landscape screens; surface parking lot planting; and general planting, irrigation and maintenance standards;

- MICC 19.12.050 pertaining to vehicular and pedestrian circulation;
- MICC 19.12.060 pertaining to screening of service and mechanical areas;
- MICC 19.12.070 pertaining to lighting;
- MICC 19.12.080 pertaining to signs.

For purposes of determining when a project will be considered major new construction or minor exterior modification, and the threshold for application of design requirements as set forth in subsections (D)(1) and (2) of this section, if there is no current King County assessed value for a structure, a current appraisal of the structure, which shall be provided by the applicant and acceptable to the code official, shall be used as the value point of reference.

The applicant must demonstrate if the proposed development requires full or partial application of design requirements.

C. MICC 19.12.020 – Site features and context.

Should the proposed development require full application of design requirements, the application of these requirements shall not be construed to require an existing structure to be demolished or relocated, or any portion of an existing structure that is otherwise not being worked on as part of the construction to be altered or modified. The proposed development application does not include any work on the site pertaining to site features and landforms, sloped or hillside development, or the relationship of buildings to site.

D. MICC 19.12.030 – Building design and visual interest.

Compliance with MICC 19.12.030 is required for both full and partial application of design standards. The objectives of this section are to ensure high quality materials and finishes are used to bring a visually interesting experience to the streetscape; ensure the building design is based on a strong, unified, coherent, and aesthetically pleasing architectural concept; ensure buildings are detailed, provide visual interest, maintain human scale, and enhance the architectural character of the neighborhood; and to ensure high quality durable materials which will help to maintain and protect property values.

These objectives are accomplished by establishing standards for scale, form, and mass, building facades, building articulation, materials, and color, building entrances, and rooflines.

Scale, form and mass.

The proposed development does not alter the current scale, form and mass of the existing building.

Building facades – Visual interest.

- a. *Facade modulation.* The proposed development includes a revision to the non-structural columns located in the middle of the balconies. These columns blocked views and provided additional entry points for water penetration. Removing the center columns enhances the outward views and makes the proportion of the arched openings more gracious and in line with classical ratios. No other revisions to the buildings existing facade modulation are proposed.
- b. *Modulation guidelines.* The proposed revision to the columns allow for the balconies to be seen more clearly and without interruption. No other revisions to the buildings existing facade modulation are proposed.

- c. *Ground level facades.* The existing ground level facade at the back of the building that is visible from a public view was constructed using materials designed to create visual interest. The ground level facades at the front and sides of the building include balconies, windows, and columns. No changes to the ground level facades, beyond revisions to the columns, are proposed.
- d. *Fenestration.* The existing building includes fenestration that is integrated in the overall building design and provides variety in facade treatment. No changes to the locations of fenestration are proposed. The existing fenestrations will be updated, however the size of the windows and doors, and operation and swing direction of the doors will remain unchanged. The frames would be a dark bronze color to complement surrounding colors.
- e. *Horizontal variation and emphasis.* The proposed design includes painting the exterior building facades in a design that is visually interesting. The balconies at the front of the building would be updated to include either the use of “Trespa Romantic Walnut” or “Trespa Aged Ash”, depending on the option preferred by the Design Commission and Monaco Villa Condominiums Board. No other changes are proposed to the building facades pertaining to horizontal variation and emphasis.
- f. *Signs.* The proposed development does not include the installation of signs.

Building articulation. The proposed design includes the use of variations of color, patterns, and arrangements of the balcony columns as facade elements to make the balconies more proportional to the scale of the building.

- a. *Tripartite articulation.* The proposed design subtly speaks to the building top, middle, and base using colors and materials that create human scale and visual interest. The applicant is responsible for demonstrating that the proposed design is equal or better than the standard for tripartite articulation, per MICC 19.12.010(E).
- b. *Fenestration.* The proposed design includes revisions to the existing balconies and non-structural columns to make the balconies more proportional to the size of the building and provide more functionality. The existing window and door frames would be updated with a dark bronze color to complement the surrounding colors. No changes are proposed to the locations of the balconies, windows, doors, or other fenestrations.
- c. *Architectural elements.* The existing balconies would be updated with either “Trespa Romantic Walnut” or “Trespa Aged Ash” finishes, depending on the preference of the Design Commission and Monaco Villa Condominiums Board. The non-structural columns located at the middle of each balcony would be removed, providing more functionality and making the balconies more proportional to the building. The proposed design includes variation to materials and colors that creates visual interest.
- d. *Upper story setback.* The proposed design does not include changes to the existing building structure or bulk.

Materials and color.

- a. *Durable building exteriors.* The applicant is responsible for demonstrating that the proposed design includes high quality and durable materials.
- b. *Consistency and continuity of design.* The proposed materials and colors included in the design will be generally used consistently on all sides of the building.
- c. *Material and color variation.* The proposed colors and materials highlight the balconies, doors, windows, and changes in building planes. The applicant is responsible for demonstrating that the

proposed variations in materials and colors are generally limited to what is required for contrast or to accentuate architectural features.

- d. *Concrete walls.* The proposed concrete walls will be architecturally treated.
- e. *Bright colors.* The proposed design does not include bright or fluorescent colors.

Building entrances.

- a. *Architectural features and design.* The existing primary entrance to the building is visually distinct from the rest of the facade. The proposed design would not change the structure of the primary entrance. The color of the entrance would be updated to match the rest of the proposed design.
- b. *Entrance connections.* The existing entrance includes landscaping and plantings that enhance the entrance. The entrance is visible from the public way.

Rooflines. No changes are proposed to the existing roofline.

Additional standards for buildings containing residential units. The proposed design enhances the existing balconies by making them more proportional to the size of the building.

E. MICC 19.12.040 – Landscape design and outdoor spaces.

Pursuant to MICC 19.12.040, the design must ensure that the landscape design reinforces the natural and wooded character of Mercer Island. The applicant is responsible for demonstrating whether the proposed development requires full or partial design review. Should the proposed development require partial design review, compliance with only MICC 19.12.040(B)(5), (6), (7), (8), (9), and (11) is required, however, application of [chapter 19.12](#) MICC shall not be construed to require an existing structure to be demolished or relocated, or any portion of an existing structure that is otherwise not being worked on as part of the construction to be altered or modified.

No changes to the existing landscape design and outdoor spaces are proposed. These areas are not being worked on in the proposed development, therefore, are not required to be altered or modified.

MICC 19.12.050 – Vehicular and pedestrian circulation. Per MICC 19.12.010(D), application of [chapter 19.12](#) MICC shall not be construed to require an existing structure to be demolished or relocated, or any portion of an existing structure that is otherwise not being worked on as part of the construction to be altered or modified.

No changes to the existing vehicular and pedestrian circulation are proposed. These areas are not being worked on for the proposed development, therefore, they are not required to be altered or modified.

F. MICC 19.12.060 – Screening of service and mechanical areas. Per MICC 19.12.010(D), application of [chapter 19.12](#) MICC shall not be construed to require an existing structure to be demolished or relocated, or any portion of an existing structure that is otherwise not being worked on as part of the construction to be altered or modified.

No changes to the existing screening of service and mechanical areas are proposed. These areas are not being worked on for the proposed development, therefore, they are not required to be altered or modified.

G. MICC 19.12.070 – Lighting. Per MICC 19.12.010(D), application of [chapter 19.12](#) MICC shall not be construed to require an existing structure to be demolished or relocated, or any portion of an existing structure that is otherwise not being worked on as part of the construction to be altered or modified.

No changes to the existing lighting are proposed. These areas are not being worked on for the proposed development, therefore, they are not required to be altered or modified.

H. MICC 19.12.080 – Signs. The proposed development does not include any new signs.

III. RECOMMENDATION

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