

3/24/2026

Criteria Compliance Narrative		
Proposal	Encounter Church Improvements	
Parcel Numbers	5459000460 & 54590000456	
Site Address	3200 78th Ave SE, Mercer Island, WA 98040	
Project Zone	MF-2 (Multi-Family)	
Lot Area	1.80 acres (78,476 sf)	
Zoning Code	Mercer Island City Code (MICC)	
Code Standard	Code Description	Proposed /Compliance
MICC 19.15.220.B.1.	No building permit or other required permit shall be issued by the city for any major new construction or minor exterior modification of any regulated improvement without prior approval of the design commission or code official as authorized pursuant to MICC 19.15.010(C)(4)(a). Certain development and activities that do not require a permit are subject to design review as provided in subsection (C)(1)(c) of this section.	Proposal requires a building permit so approval from the design commission is also required.
MICC 19.15.220.C.1.c.	<p>i.The following development proposals shall require design commission review:</p> <p>(b)Any additions of gross floor area to an existing building(s);</p> <p>(c)Any alterations to an existing building that will result in a change of 50 percent, or more, of the exterior surface area;</p>	Proposal is applying for design commission review and approval because it proposes to increase the gross floor area of the existing building, and because it will alter more than 50% of the exterior surface area of the existing building.
MICC 19.15.220.C.1.c.	<p>iii.Exemptions from design review. The following activities shall be exempt from either design commission or code official design review:</p> <p>(a)Any activity which does not require a building permit; or</p> <p>(b)Interior work that does not alter the exterior of the structure; or</p>	Proposal does contain interior renovation work that does not require a building permit and which does not alter the exterior of the building, so the proposal is not applying for design commission review and approval for this work.

<p>MICC 19.03.010.A.</p>	<p>Design requirements.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>2.Plans for any development on property located in an MF zone shall be submitted to the design commission for its approval as set out in MICC 19.15.220. This requirement does not apply to property owned by or under the control of the city or to single-family dwellings.</p>	<p>Proposal will comply with the design standards for zones outside the Town Center. Reference the rest of the criteria compliance narrative for the applicable design standards.</p>
<p>MICC 19.03.010.C.</p> <p>MICC 19.02.010.C.</p>	<p>Uses permitted in zone MF-2.</p> <p>1.Any use permitted in zones R-8.4, R-9.6, R-12, and R-15.</p> <p>Conditional uses. The following uses are permitted when authorized by the issuance of a conditional use permit when the applicable conditions set forth in this section and in MICC 19.15.040 have been met:</p> <p>3.Places of worship subject to the following conditions:</p> <p>a.All structures shall be located at least 35 feet from any abutting property.</p> <p>b.Off-street parking shall be established and maintained at a ratio of one parking space for each five seats in the chapel, nave, sanctuary, or similar worship area.</p>	<p>Proposal is applying for a Conditional Use Permit since an approved permit is not on file with the city and likely has not been issued in the history of the property. The existing structure is at least 35 feet from the abutting property, and off-street parking is provided at a ratio of parking space for each five seats in the Sanctuary.</p>

MICC 19.06.110.A.2.	<p>Criteria for conditional use permits that are not located in Town Center. An applicant must demonstrate how the development proposal meets the following criteria:</p> <p>a.The permit is consistent with the regulations applicable to the zone in which the lot is located;</p> <p>b.The proposed use is determined to be acceptable in terms of size and location of site, nature of the proposed uses, character of surrounding development, traffic capacities of adjacent streets, environmental factors, size of proposed buildings, and density;</p> <p>c.The use is consistent with policies and provisions of the comprehensive plan; and</p> <p>d.Conditions shall be attached to the permit assuring that the use is compatible with other existing and potential uses within the same general area and that the use shall not constitute a nuisance.</p>	<p>As noted in the previous line item, the proposal meets the regulations required for a place of worship within the zone MF-2. The existing structure is at least 35 feet from the abutting property, and off-street parking is provided at a ratio of parking space for each five seats in the Sanctuary. The proposed use, a place of worship, is acceptable in terms of the factors listed under item b. because the Church has been located on this site for at least 50 years while undergoing multiple additions. Each addition has been approved by the city, and the current structure does not cause issues in terms of the factors listed under item b. The proposed Narthex expansion, similar to the past additions, will enhance the use of the site as a place of worship and will not be considered detrimental to the surrounding area. For similar reasons, the use of the site as a place of worship is consistent with the policies and provisions of the city's comprehensive plan.</p>
MICC 19.03.010.E.	<p>Building height limit.</p> <p>1.MF-2, MF-3: 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.</p> <p>2.Building height for buildings within the MF-2 and MF-3 zones shall be calculated using the method described in MICC 19.11.030(A)(3).</p>	<p>The Narthex expansion is less than 36 feet in height and is only one story.</p>
MICC 19.03.010.H.	<p>Lot coverage.</p> <p>Except as otherwise provided in this section, not more than 35 percent of any lot shall be covered with structures. For townhouse developments, the lot coverage on an individual townhouse lot can exceed 35 percent provided that not more than 35 percent of the entire development site is covered with structures.</p>	<p>The area covered by the structure, including the proposed addition, is 22,254 sf and the total area of the site is 78,476 sf. Approximately 28.36% of the site area is covered by structure, which is less than the maximum lot coverage of 35%.</p>

<p>MICC 19.12.010.A.</p>	<p>Applicability. This chapter establishes design standards for regulated improvements in all zones established by MICC 19.01.040, except Town Center. Design standards for Town Center are set forth in chapter 19.11 MICC. These standards are in addition to any other standards that may be applicable to development in the zone in which the development occurs. In the PBZ, the terms of the PBZ site plan as set forth in MICC 19.04.010 shall control; provided, to the extent not inconsistent with MICC 19.04.010, the provisions of MICC 19.12.010 [excluding (D)(2)(b) and (c)], 19.12.030, 19.12.060, 19.12.070 and 19.12.080 shall apply. These design standards are not intended to slow or restrict development, but to add consistency and predictability to the permit review process.</p>	<p>Proposal is located outside of the Towne Center and adheres to the design standards specified in chapter 19.12.</p>
<p>MICC 19.12.010.D.2.</p>	<p>Partial application of design requirements: minor exterior modification. The following design requirements shall apply when there is a minor exterior modification, as defined in MICC 19.16.010:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.MICC 19.12.030 pertaining to building design and visual interest; b.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; c.MICC 19.12.050 pertaining to vehicular and pedestrian circulation; d.MICC 19.12.060 pertaining to screening of service and mechanical areas; e.MICC 19.12.070 pertaining to lighting; f.MICC 19.12.080 pertaining to signs; 	<p>Proposal is considered a minor exterior modification because the intentional exterior alterations and enlargement of the building will not incur construction costs over a three year period in excess of 50 percent of the existing structure's current King County assessed value at the time of this application for design commission review.</p>

<p>MICC 19.12.030.B.2.</p>	<p>a.Facade modulation. As set forth in subsection 2(b) below, building facade modulation shall break up the overall bulk and mass of the exterior of buildings and structures.</p> <p>b. Modulation guidelines. Building facade modulation must occur at no less than every 50 feet of wall length. Building facade modulation must occur every 25 feet of wall length along any facade visible from the public right of way. Building facade modulation must utilize at least three of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i.Window fenestration patterns and/or entries; ii.Use of vertical piers/columns; iii.Change in roofline; iv.Change in building material or siding style; v.Vertical elements such as a trellis with plants, green wall, art element; or vi.Vertical building modulation of at least 12 inches in depth if tied to a change in roofline modulation or a change in building material, siding style, or color. 	<p>The facade of the Narthex expansion that faces the public way is less than 50 feet in width so modulation is not required on the expansion itself.</p>
<p>MICC 19.12.030.B.2. (continued)</p>	<p>c.Ground level facades. Untreated blank walls at the ground level that may be visible from a public right of way view are prohibited. One of the following features must be provided every fifteen horizontal feet of ground-level wall visible from a public right of way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i.Display windows at least 16 inches of depth to allow for changeable displays. Tack on display cases shall not qualify as a blank wall treatment. ii.A landscape planting bed at least five feet wide or a raised planter bed at least two feet high and three feet wide in front of the wall with planting materials that are sufficient to obscure or screen at least sixty (60) percent of the wall's surface within three years. iii.A vertical trellis in front of the wall with climbing vines or plant materials. The vertical trellis must be designed to cover at least sixty (60) percent of the wall within three years of planting. iv.A mural covering at least sixty (60) percent of the blank wall space. A mural that meets the definition of a sign established in Chapter 19.16 MICC is also subject to the sign regulations in MICC 19.12.080. 	<p>The ground level facade of the Narthex expansion that faces the public way is almost entirely a glass curtain wall which provides visual interest for the nearby public and those entering the Church. The transparency of the glass curtain wall also provides a contrast from the Sanctuary which has little fenestration along each facade which faces the street front.</p>

<p>MICC 19.12.030.B.4.</p>	<p>a.Beveled metal siding, mirrored glass, and vinyl siding are prohibited. Concrete walls must be architecturally treated with one of the following features: textured concrete such as exposed aggregate, sand blasting, stamping, or color coating.</p>	<p>High quality building materials are proposed for the Narthex expansion that are durable and require minimal maintenance. The materials and colors are chosen to be cohesive with the existing Church structures that are proposed to be refinished as part of the renovation work. The existing brick and siding are proposed to be painted in a natural and neutral color scheme that provides some contrast while also updating the look and feel of the Church facades.</p>
<p>MICC 19.12.030.B.5.</p>	<p>a.Architectural features and design. A primary entrance must be identified on the site plan submitted with any application for construction of a new building. The primary entrance must be made visually distinct from the rest of the building facade using at least one of the following architectural features: recessed entrances, roof forms that protrude from the building facade, and decorative awnings, canopies, porte-cocheres, and or covered walkways. b.Entrance connections. The primary entrance to a building must be visible from the public way or physically connected to the public right of way with walkways.</p>	<p>The Narthex is the primary building entrance and the expansion is proposed as part of the renovation work to make the entrance visually distinctive for current and new Church members. Special attention is given to the primary entrance by creating a modern architectural feature, with glass curtain walls and large roof overhangs, that provides an updated look and feel to the Church. The simple form of the expansion is cohesive with the existing structures by not visually overpowering them.</p>

<p>MICC 19.12.030.B.6.</p>	<p>Roofline variation, numeric standard. Roof line variation shall occur at a minimum rate of one variation per 50 feet of roof line length on all multifamily structures, and one variation per 70 feet of roof line on all commercial, office or public structures. Roof line variation shall be achieved using one or more of the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Vertical off-set ridge or cornice line; ii. Horizontal off-set ridge or cornice line; iii. Variations of roof pitch between 5:12 and 12:12; iv. Roofline features such as dormers, stepped roofs, and gables; v. vertical dimensions, such as multi-planed and intersecting rooflines; or vi. flat-roofed designs that include architectural details such as cornices and decorative facings. 	<p>The Narthex expansion is less than 70 feet in length so roofline modulation is not required, but it does provide visual interest and variation compared to the existing Church structures. The low-slope roof has an overhang of approximately 7 feet to reduce the perceived building height and mass.</p>
<p>MICC 19.12.040.B.5.</p>	<p>Entrance landscaping. For commercial and regulated public facilities, landscaping at entrances should frame an outdoor space near the entrance and reinforce this important building feature as a gathering place.</p>	<p>The existing landscaping near the current entrance to the Narthex from the parking lot will be kept with the proposed Narthex expansion. Any existing landscaping within the Narthex expansion footprint will be removed. All existing landscaping at the other entrances to the Church will remain.</p>
<p>MICC 19.12.040.B.6.</p>	<p>Planting material, types and design. The following planting types should be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Native or northwest-adapted plants should be used for all open space and buffer locations and drought tolerant plantings should be used in a majority of plantings. b. New plantings should complement existing species native to the Pacific Northwest. c. Ground cover should be used to ensure planting areas are attractive, minimize maintenance and the potential for encroachment of invasive plant material. Ground cover should be planted and spaced to achieve total coverage within three years after installation. 	<p>The proposal does not include new landscaping and proposes to maintain the existing landscaping throughout the site.</p>

MICC 19.12.040.B.7.	<p>Perimeter screen types and widths by use and location.</p> <p>a.Required screen types and widths. The following screen types and widths should be used:</p> <p>b.Perimeter width averaging. Averaging of screen widths may be allowed, if the objectives of this section, the minimum landscape area requirements set forth in MICC 19.12.040(B)(4) and the following criteria are met:</p> <p>i.Plant material is clustered to more effectively screen parking areas and structures; and</p> <p>ii.Significant trees are retained.</p>	The proposal does not include new landscaping and proposes to maintain the existing landscaping throughout the site.
MICC 19.12.040.B.8.	<p>Perimeter landscape screens. Perimeter landscape screens should be consistent with the following definitions of screen types. Where existing undergrowth will be retained, the shrub and ground cover requirements for all screen types may be adjusted, provided the objectives of this section are met.</p> <p>a.Full screen. A full screen provides a dense vegetated separation between dissimilar uses on adjacent properties. A full screen should block views from adjacent properties as seen at the pedestrian eye level in all seasons within three years of installation. The number of trees provided shall be proportionate to one tree for every ten feet of landscape perimeter length.</p> <p>b.Partial screen. A partial screen provides a moderate vegetated separation between uses on adjacent properties and intermittent views to adjacent properties. A partial screen shall provide the desired screening function as seen at the pedestrian eye level in all seasons within three years of installation. The number of trees provided shall be proportionate to one tree for every 20 feet of landscape perimeter length.</p> <p>c.Filtered screen. A filtered screen should provide in all seasons and within three years of installation a lightly vegetated visual separation between uses on adjacent properties and allow visual access to adjacent properties. When compared to the other screen types, a filtered screen should be characterized by more open spaces, light filtration and transparency through the plant material forming the screen.</p>	The proposal does not include new landscaping and proposes to maintain the existing landscaping throughout the site.

<p>MICC 19.12.040.B.9.</p>	<p>Surface parking lot planting. Surface parking lot planting is required in addition to required perimeter landscape screens. The requirements for surface parking lot planting for new parking lots with fewer than 20 spaces and for additions or remodels may be waived or modified if the applicant can demonstrate that these standards would reduce the amount of parking below the minimum required for the site.</p> <p>a. Standards by location. Surface parking lots not located adjacent to public rights-of-way should provide one tree for every six parking stalls. Surface parking lots located in the front of buildings or adjacent to public rights-of-way should provide one tree for every four parking stalls. Trees should be at least six feet high at the time of planting. All lots should have planting areas at the end of parking aisles.</p> <p>b. Common standards for surface parking lot planting. The following standards apply to all surface parking lot planting:</p> <p>i. Shrubs. Shrubs should be maintained at a maximum three feet height within surface parking lots so views between vehicles and pedestrians will not be blocked. Irregular spacing and clustering is encouraged; however, the minimum number of shrubs shall be determined by assuming shrubs are planted on three foot centers throughout the entire planting area. Where vehicle headlights may project onto neighboring properties, shrubs shall be spaced to provide a continuous planting buffer.</p> <p>ii. Planting islands or strips. Planting islands or strips should have an area of at least 80 square feet and a narrow dimension of not less than five feet if wheel stops are provided to prevent vehicle overhang. A narrow dimension of not less than eight feet may be provided if the vehicle overhang area is included in the planting area.</p>	<p>The proposal does not include new landscaping and proposes to maintain the existing landscaping throughout the site.</p>
<p>MICC 19.12.040.B.9. (continued)</p>	<p>iii. Tree location. In parking lots, trees should be planted no closer than four feet from pavement edges where vehicles overhang planted areas. Curb stops may be used to proportionally decrease this distance.</p> <p>iv. Narrow planting strips and parking spaces. Narrow parking lot islands or peninsulas and planting strips shall not be planted in sod. Location of wider parking spaces adjacent to islands is suggested to reduce damage to plant materials.</p> <p>v. Clustering of new plant material. Clustering of new plant material within surface parking lots may be approved if the objectives of this section are met.</p>	

<p>MICC 19.12.040.B.11.</p>	<p>General planting, irrigation and maintenance standards. The following standards apply to the planting requirements set forth above:</p> <p>a.Coverage. Planting areas should be completely covered with trees, shrubs, flowers, mulched areas, and/or ground covers.</p> <p>b.Berms and landforms. Earth berms and landforms in combination with shrubs and trees may be used to achieve the initial planting height requirement.</p> <p>c.Minimum width. All planting areas should be a minimum of five feet in width. Planting areas should be wider wherever possible.</p> <p>d.Sight clearance. At intersections, plantings shall not create sight obstructions that may compromise pedestrian or traffic safety.</p> <p>e.Planting coverage. All required planting areas should extend to the ditch slope, curb line, street edge, or area of sidewalk.</p> <p>f.Curbs required. Permanent curbs or structural barriers/dividers should enclose planting areas in vehicle use areas except when draining runoff from pavement to planting areas functioning as rain gardens or other low impact development facilities. Wheel stops should also be used to protect planting areas from damage due to cars overhanging the curb.</p>	<p>The proposal does not include new landscaping and proposes to maintain the existing landscaping throughout the site.</p>
<p>MICC 19.12.040.B.11. (continued)</p>	<p>g.Plantings near utilities. Trees shall not be planted within eight feet of a water or sewer pipeline. Shrubs shall be at least four feet from hydrants. A full screen will be required to screen above-ground utilities from adjacent uses and public rights-of-way. Perimeter plantings shall be clustered in areas to screen structures, utility structures, loading areas, trash enclosures, storage areas and mechanical equipment. This subsection shall not apply to utilities, structures, loading areas, enclosures or equipment unless the utility, structure, loading area, enclosure or equipment is being added as part of the regulated improvement being reviewed.</p> <p>h.Drainage. Planting areas shall be provided with adequate drainage.</p> <p>i.Maintenance requirements. All required landscaping shall be maintained in good condition. Plant material should be cared for in a way that allows their natural form to be maintained, even when the plant reaches maturity. Performance guarantees to ensure maintenance or required landscaping may be required pursuant to MICC 19.01.060.</p>	

<p>MICC 19.07.020</p>	<p>A.Except as specifically exempted by section 19.07.120, exemptions, these regulations apply to land uses, development activity, and all structures and facilities within the city of Mercer Island that contain any of the following critical areas and/or their buffers, as defined in chapter 19.16:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Geologically hazardous areas; 2.Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas; 3.Watercourses; and 4.Wetlands. <p>B.The city shall not approve any development proposal or otherwise issue any authorization to alter the condition of any land, water or vegetation or to construct or alter any structure or improvement without first assuring compliance with the requirements of this chapter or determining that this chapter is not applicable to the development.</p> <p>C.Approval of a development proposal pursuant to the provisions of this chapter does not discharge the applicant of the obligation to comply with the provisions of this chapter.</p>	<p>Proposal is located within a geologically hazardous area so it must comply with the requirements of this chapter and a critical area review is required.</p>
<p>MICC 19.07.090.B</p>	<p>Critical area review 2.</p> <p>2.Review timing and sequence.</p> <p>b.When development and/or activity is proposed on a site containing only geologically hazardous areas, an applicant has the option of either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i.Applying for a critical area review 2 in advance of construction permits, using the procedures required for a Type 3 land use review; or ii.Requesting consolidation of the review of geologically hazardous areas together with construction permit review. 	<p>Proposal is applying for a critical area 2 review because it contains geologically hazardous areas, but it does not propose buffer averaging or reduction of wetland or watercourse buffers.</p>