

## PROJECT

Barnabie Point Project  
3700 E Mercer Way  
Project Narrative, Design Review

18 June 2025

### Project Narrative

The development site at 3700 E Mercer Way includes both residentially zoned and commercially zoned properties. On the commercially zoned property on the northwest corner of the site, the proposed uses are permitted outright.

The proposed project on the commercially zoned lot is a 3-story mixed-use building housing a Preschool-8 private school and community multipurpose space on levels 0, 1 and 2; and B-occupancy community rental space on levels 2 and 3. (B occupancy includes offices and training/skill development not in a school or academic program.) The building covers 16,417 SF of the lot; the Gross Floor Area is 40,511 SF.

The existing permitted uses on the residentially zoned lots at 3700 E Mercer Way site include a synagogue building (use approved 1970); caretaker's facility and outdoor play areas (1979); multipurpose building (1979); non-commercial recreational area used between 7 am and 10 pm (1979); and associated parking.

There is a proposed amendment to the existing conditional use permit(s) currently under review. The proposed physical changes to the existing property related to the Conditional Use Permit are limited to pedestrian pathways, underground utilities, fencing, and landscaping.

### Site Features and Context

The project meets the intent of the Mercer Island City Code 19.12.020:

All trees outside of the building foundations will be preserved and featured. Existing slopes outside of the building footprint are retained where possible.

Building is stepped with the slope of the site. Ground floor canopies and recessed entry provides a sense of scale and the pedestrian walk connects the existing synagogue with the public way.

Modulation and landscape buffers provide a transition between the scale of the I-90 freeway, the new building and the residences to the south. They are also separated by a full lot which is open space (parking).

## **Building Design and Visual Interest**

The project meets the intent of the Mercer Island City Code 19.12.030:

The new building mediates between the height of the freeway construction and the residential buildings to the south. The rockery and grade change along the south edge of the parking lot reduces the apparent height of the building. It is set far enough west of the existing synagogue to create a pleasing rhythm of building mass and open space, and to preserve as many large trees as possible. Adjacent streets have a number of two- and three-story buildings, including 9725 SE 36th St, 3795 E Mercer Way, and 3801 E Mercer Way.

The mass of the building is made visually interesting by facade modulation, stepped massing, separate gym volume, a varying roofline and varied facade materials.

The building is nestled between trees on the East and West. A stepped massing on the North, an offset second story and horizontal facade modulation on the South reduces visual bulk. The rockery and grade change along the south edge of the parking lot reduces the apparent height of the building. A stepped building massing along the vertical plane on the North breaks the overall bulk as viewed from the North, East and West. An indentation in the South Facade breaks the linear facade into 3 sections and varies the roofline to provide horizontal building facade modulation. A canopy across this indentation provides deep shadow and texture. The eastern and western most sections are further visually broken vertically by extruding the second story. Variation in facade materials of various sections visually modulate the facade.

The material relates to the idea of a forest, with vertically oriented cladding and variegated tones. The massing steps down the hill, expressing distinct volumes at the gym/multipurpose space and the second level. Cues from the site inform the design rather than an architectural style; the building is intended to be a "background" building that is punctuated by the main recess at the entry.

A rich palette of variegated earth tones are used. Metal on the facade provides reflective movement with the changing sun. Within the entry recess, a cheerful pop of color announces the school entry without overwhelming the facade. Signage and a projecting canopy add to the texture and depth at the entry.

## **ISSUED BY**

Anjali Grant