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Ms. Molly McGuire
Assistant Planner
City of Mercer Island
Community Planning and Development 9611 SE 36th Street
Mercer Island, WA 98040

molly.mcguire@mercerisland.gov

Re: Public Comment - File No. 2207-019
6950 SE Maker Street/Parcel No. 9350900620

Dear Ms. McGuire

We own and live at the residence located at 7155 SE Maker Street, across SE Maker Street from the referenced project ("Project") proposed for 6950 SE Maker Street ("Site"). The Site is owned by The Strand Trust ("Strand"). Our home is on the south side of SE Maker Street and slightly east (uphill) of Project.

We have reviewed the letters submitted to you by our neighbors Jim and Susan Mattison ("Mattison") and Dan Grove ("Grove") regarding their concerns about the Project. We share and hereby incorporate their concerns, which are very well stated in their letters such that it would be redundant to repeat them here.

A. In particular, we share the concerns that the Project does not properly calculate the Existing Grade of the Site, as defined in MICC 19.16, in determining the permitted height for the Project. This results in a proposed residence that would be substantially taller than permitted by the MICC and would loom high above the rest of the homes in the neighborhood. We are also concerned that the rockery retaining walls that support a substantial amount of fill

Ms. Molly McGuire
Assistant Planner
City of Mercer Island
Page -2

on the Site may be prone to failure and that this possibility is not addressed in the Project.

As is well stated in the Mattison and Grove letters and documented in the Geotech Consultants, Inc., report dated March 21, 2022, submitted by Strand in support of the Project application, the original elevation of the Site dropped steeply from east to west. Construction of the existing residence on the Site in the 1950s required (1) placing a substantial amount of fill on the Site to create a level building area on the east portion of the Site and (2) building stone retaining walls on the boundaries of the Site to hold the imported fill in place. The Geotech Consultants report states that approximately 5.5' to 11' of fill was placed on the west portion of the Site and approximately 2.8' to 3.2' of fill was placed on the east portion of the Site prior to construction of the existing residence. P. 3 of the Geotech Consultants report. Geotech Consultants also determined that the rock retaining walls built to hold this fill in place are up to approximately 15.5' high on the southwest boundary of the Site and up to approximately 10' high on the west boundary of the site. These retaining walls are substantially higher than the 72" permitted by the current code provisions (MICC 19.02.050(D)(5)).

Notwithstanding the substantial amount of fill located on the Site, the Proposal does not appear to use the Site's "Existing Grade," as defined by MICC19.16.010, to determine the permitted height of the proposed residence at the Site. Use of the appropriate Existing Grade, i.e., the grade prior to bringing a substantial amount of fill to the Site, would reduce the permitted height of the proposed residence by several feet, creating a structure less out of scale to the neighborhood and in compliance with the MICC.

The Geotech Consultants report further states that the rock retaining wall on the west boundary of the Site is not properly engineered and is at risk of shifting or failing, likely during wet conditions or a large earthquake. GeoTech Consultants report at p. 5 and pp. 6 - 7.. As noted in the Grove letter, there has been a past failure of the retaining wall on the west boundary of the Site. The Proposal does not seem to address these concerns articulated by Strand's consultant. The possible failure of the rockery retaining walls is not only a real and direct risk to neighbors downhill from the Site; the consequences of a failure and the work required to respond to even a partial failure of a retaining wall would impact the use of Maker Street for all its residents. See discussion below.

B. We also have concerns about the impact the Project will have on us and our neighbors. There are a total of five residences, including the existing one on the Site, on the section of SE Maker Street where our home and the Site are located. For the Project to proceed smoothly and with a minimum of disruption

Ms. Molly McGuire
Assistant Planner
City of Mercer Island
Page -3

and inconvenience to those of us who live here, there will have to be careful and diligent management of the Project and its impact on our ability to use and peaceably live on our street. Strand has never communicated with us at all about the Project, which raises questions about how much concern or even interest Strand has for the impact of the Project on the neighborhood.

SE Maker Street consists of two unconnected dead end streets. The lower, west portion, intersects at its west with West Mercer Way. The upper, east piece, where our home and the Site are located, intersects at its east with 72nd Avenue SE. There are five residences on our (east) piece of SE Maker Street, including the one on the Site. The street is narrow and drops off steeply and narrows further just west of the driveway for the Site. There is convenient street parking for just two automobiles on the entire street. That parking is located east and uphill from the Site and is shared by the neighborhood for visitors, delivery and trades vehicles, and the like.

Three driveways (on the Mattisons' property at 7075 SEMaker Street, our property at 7155 SE Maker Street, and the Site at 6950 SE Maker Street) converge at the same point of the street, just before it drops down to the west. Drivers often attempt to use one or more of the driveways to turn around, but the driveways are not aligned to make turning around easy, and drivers frequently drive over plantings and sometimes become hung up on rockery in trying to maneuver.

All this is to point out that traffic from large construction and delivery vehicles and trades vehicles associated with the Project will have a heavy impact on our section of SE Maker Street, us, and our neighbors. We agree with the concerns stated in the Mattisons' letter that if the Project is to proceed smoothly and with a minimum of disruption and inconvenience to the neighboring residents, close and consistent supervision of the Project by Strand and its general contractor, respect for the Project's neighbors, and communication with the those of us who live close to the Project, will be required.

We join the Mattisons in requesting that Strand and its general contractor file a Construction Management Plan and convene a pre-construction meeting (prior to demolition) attended by a City code compliance officer, contractor representative, architect, and neighbors to open lines of communication to address the challenges that may well arise during the Project.

Ms. Molly McGuire
Assistant Planner
City of Mercer Island
Page -4

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to comment on the Proposal.

Respectfully submitted,,

Handwritten signatures of Jim Miller and Margaret Miller. The signature for Jim Miller is written in a cursive style, and the signature for Margaret Miller is also in cursive, appearing below the first signature.

Jim Miller
Margaret Miller