



**GOLDSMITH**  
LAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

July 7, 2023

City of Mercer Island Planning & Development  
9611 SE 36th Street  
Mercer Island, WA 98040

Re: Strand Residence – 2207-019  
6950 Maker Street  
Mercer Island, WA 98040

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is being written at the request of Jeffrey Almeter who is serving as the Project Architect for the Strand Trust project and is the applicant for the building permit that has been submitted to the City of Mercer Island.

The project entails the removal of an existing residence and the construction of a new residence in replacement. The purpose of this letter is to address the subject of 'existing grade' as defined by the Mercer Island municipal code and how the determination of said existing grade relates to the current conditions found on the subject lot.

Existing grade as defined in MICC 19.16010 Definitions is: "Any human-induced action which impacts the existing condition of the area, including but not limited to grading, filling, dredging, draining, channeling and paving (including construction and application of gravel). "Alteration" does not include walking, passive recreation, fishing, or similar activities."

There has been a significant amount of research and a volume of materials submitted to the city in regard to this project. The intent of this letter is not to address the related commentary but to provide an independent, objective review of the available information as it may relate to the determination of the existing grade.

The existing house was built in 1952. Settlement of the island is known to have begun by the 1880s. I have found little survey information specific to the subject area reflecting the progress of development over the intervening years. There is limited to no survey information available that reflects the grades on the subject lot at the time of construction.

White Brothers First Addition to East Seattle is the plat that is the basis of the current lot configuration being recorded in 1890. The street fronting the subject property, Maker Street, was presumably built after the creation of the Plat, thus representing the first grading efforts related to the surrounding properties. However, it is possible if not probable that logging or other activities may have preceded platting.

Regardless, we know the street exists and the building of Maker Street by itself would have required grading efforts to occur. It is also evident that grading has occurred on all of the lots surrounding the subject property. A review of the King County LiDAR bare earth images makes that fact very clear. That said, what ground surfaces may still be original cannot be definitively defined.

Large trees can at times be used as an indicator of the existing ground. The only possibly relevant survey that this surveyor found showing trees is one conducted in 1989 by D. R. Strong on the property to the north of the subject parcel. The size and type of trees shown on the survey would indicate that they are not indicative of old-growth trees and that logging had likely occurred at some point leading to the probability of grading efforts at that period of time.

The general circumstances described above would indicate any recent survey data would likely not be indicative of existing grade prior to any development. However, even accepting the argument that has been postulated in previous public comments that the contours shown on the above-noted D. R. Strong survey do represent the original grade, it cannot follow that the grades shown on other surveys of Maker Street also represent the original grade. It is therefore not reasonable to expect to be able to interpolate contours across the subject property between contours from divergent sources on the lot to the north and on Maker Street.

There is no record survey information seen by this surveyor that provides information that would enable a determination of the grades on the subject lot prior to development and it is, therefore, this surveyor's opinion that the best information indicative of the original grade would be those elevations in the vicinity of the existing house as shown on the survey of the subject property by Terrane dated May 27, 2021, and updated on November 8, 2022.

Sincerely,



**Lee Nyquist, P.L.S. | Goldsmith Engineering**

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