



memorandum

date July 19, 2021

to Jeff Thomas, Planning Director
Allison Van Gorp, Deputy Planning Director

from Scott Olmsted, ESA

subject DRAFT Review of 5637 East Mercer Way (MI Treehouse, LLC) – Reasonable Use Exception and Variance Applications (CAO15-001 and VAR18-002)

Environmental Science Associates (ESA) has prepared this memorandum on behalf of the City of Mercer Island (City) to address one outstanding item noted in our May 5, 2021 review letter for the project, as follows:

- The revised site plan [Core Design, dated June, 2018 and stamped November 16, 2020] no longer depicts a retaining wall located west and southwest of the proposed residence. ESA previously commented on the wall and associated grading for the building foundation and potential impacts to wetland hydrology. **ESA seeks clarification for the current lack of grading within the slope wetland to accommodate the structure.** If grading is still required, ESA continues to recommend the applicant provide additional details about the onsite drainage system and how it will operate to not artificially drain wetland areas. Alternatively, the applicant can propose an offset from the drainage system that would account for lost wetland hydrology and mitigate impacts through additional credit purchase.

Core Design responded in a letter titled *MI Treehouse – CAO15-001/VAR18-002 Core Project No. XX*, dated May 17, 2021, that indicated no retaining wall would be installed. Instead, the design team shifted the house entry away from the south elevation and to the east and proposes shoring at the edge of excavation to minimize impacts to wetlands and buffers and to avoid disturbance to steep slopes.

Additionally, the design team adjusted the drainage system design to address wetland drainage concerns. Design modifications resulted in a larger diameter, but shorter, detention tank. The tank was also re-orientated to better follow the proposed driveway grading and allow for a shallower excavation with the tank bottom at or above the Stream B elevation.

Core's response letter goes on to state:

Additionally, there is no long-term impact to wetland hydrology since the drainage system for the house slows down and redirects stormwater with discharge into the same system and immediately adjacent to the project parcel (negligible distance downstream for any long term impacts). In essence, the water that currently flows through the soil beneath the house site toward the wetland and stream will continue to be discharged to the wetland and stream.

It remains difficult to determine if wetland hydrology will be affected post-project; therefore, ESA recommends that a wetland delineation be conducted in the spring, as part of the Year 5 mitigation monitoring requirement to



determine onsite wetland extents. Should wetland area decrease post-project, ESA recommends the applicant purchase additional credits from the King County Mitigation Reserves Program.

If you have any questions, please call me at (206) 789-2381 or via email at solmsted@esassoc.com.