



Date: September 24, 2024

To: City of Mercer Island
Community Planning & Development

From: Kati Eitzman – Sturman Architects
Brad Sturman – Sturman Architects

Re: Forest Ave Lot 1
5222 Forest Ave SE
Mercer Island, WA 98040

Subj.: Explanation and Justification for removal of exceptional trees

This letter is being submitted as part of an application for a building permit.

We are requesting the removal of regulated tree 1003 and exceptional tree 1004.

Applicable to all removed trees:

Per code 19.10.060(3)(b):
“Retention of an exceptional tree(s) with a diameter of 24 inches or more will limit the constructable gross floor area to less than 85 percent of the maximum gross floor area allowed under chapter 19.02 MICC;”

Per 19.02.020(D)(3)(b), the zoning of this lot allows us a maximum of 6000 square feet for our GFA. Per code 19.10.060(3)(b), we are guaranteed 85% of this maximum GFA. 85% of 6000 square feet is 5100 square feet GFA guaranteed.

This site is encumbered with a large Native Growth Protection Area and a watercourse with a 60-foot buffer and additional 10-foot building setback. This creates an area of 7778 square feet of the lot which is unavailable to build on. A second watercourse has been identified off-property to the west, but its buffer and setback affect the site at the southwest corner. A one-time 25% buffer reduction and mitigation is currently being proposed in a concurrent Critical Area 2 review. Another impediment is an existing sewer easement which cuts across the corner of the lot, further decreasing the available building pad.



S T U R M A N
A R C H I T E C T S

Tree 1003 is a 19.2" DBH Douglas Fir. Its minimum critical root zone is seven feet and average dripline radius of 13 feet.

Tree 1004 is a 33.5" DBH Douglas Fir. Its minimum critical root zone is 11 feet and average dripline radius is 21 feet.

Both trees impact the southern portion of the buildable area. Attempting to keep both trees would greatly diminish the ability to build 85% of the guaranteed GFA. Avoiding excavation into the minimum root zones would eliminate at least an additional 600 square feet from the buildable area.

After all these factors are taken into consideration, the area of building pad allowed for development would 3400 square feet. To achieve a house close to the allowable maximum GFA, a two-story house is proposed. A basement is not feasible as it would create increased excavation, impacting a greater area of the building pad, specifically Right of Way tree 1005.

Without the removal of trees 1003 and 1004, it would not be feasible to construct a house with 85% of the allowable GFA per Mercer Island city code. We have done our very best to retain as many trees as possible, minimize harmful impacts, and thoughtfully site our house.

Sincerely,

Kati Eitzman
Sturman Architects