CULTURAL RESOURCES REPORT COVER SHEET

Project Number: 2025-06-03655

Author: Alex L. Berry

Title of Report: Cultural Resource Assessment at Mercer Island Beach Club 8326 Avalon Drive, Mercer Island, King County, Washington

Date of Report: June 24, 2025

County: King Section: 31 Township: 24 N Range: 5 E

Quad: Mercer Island (2023) Acres:2.25

PDF of report submitted (REQUIRED) ☒ Yes

Historic Property Inventory Forms to be Approved Online? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Archaeological Site(s)/Isolate(s) Found or Amended? ☐ Yes ☒ No

TCP(s) found? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Replace a draft? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Satisfy a DAHP Archaeological Excavation Permit requirement? ☐ Yes # ☒ No

Were Human Remains Found? ☐ Yes DAHP Case # ☒ No

DAHP Archaeological Site #:

_____
_____
_____
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_____

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- Please be sure that any PDF submitted to DAHP has its cover sheet, figures, graphics, appendices, attachments, correspondence, etc., compiled into one single PDF file.
- Please check that the PDF displays correctly when opened.

DRAYTON ARCHAEOLOGY

Cultural Resource Assessment at Mercer Island Beach Club 8326 Avalon Drive, Mercer Island, King County, Washington

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Drayton Archaeology Report: 0625C

June 24, 2025

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Cultural Resource Assessment at Mercer Island Beach Club 8326 Avalon Drive, Mercer Island, King County, Washington

Authors:	Alex L. Berry
Date:	June 24, 2025
Location:	Mercer Island, King County, Washington
USGS Quad:	Mercer Island, WA 7.5-minute USGS Quadrangle (2023)
Township, Range, Section:	T 24 N R 5 E S 31

SUMMARY

Drayton Archaeology (Drayton) was retained by Gardner Morelli to conduct an archaeological assessment of 8326 Avalon Drive (TPN: 312405-9003), Mercer Island, King County for a proposed marina development. The project involves a series of shoreline and dock improvements**.** The purpose of this review is to assess the property for cultural resources that may complicate the proposed work. This archaeological assessment was conducted to satisfy permits under Mercer Island, Community Planning & Development (SHL25-008, SHL25-007, AND SEP25-007) and a request from the Snoqualmie Tribe for cultural resources oversight. If archaeological / cultural resources are encountered the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) assumes lead agency status under RCW 27.53.

Drayton's cultural resources assessment consisted of a thorough background review, field investigation, and production of this report. Background review concluded the project is in an area of moderate probability for cultural resources based on the property's proximity to known archaeological sites, topography, and ecological context. On-site fieldwork included systematic visual reconnaissance and subsurface investigation of areas of proposed impact. No precontact or historic archaeological deposits were encountered within the project area during Drayton's field investigation. Drayton recommends the project proceed with no additional archaeological oversight.

Although no archaeological management or mitigation measures are recommended, the project is within an area of moderate probability for encountering cultural resources. A general inadvertent discovery plan (IDP) for the information of all involved in the project is at the end of this document. It is the responsibility of all involved to ensure proper consideration for cultural resources and to develop archaeological mitigation strategies, as needed.

REGULATORY CONTEXT

The subject project is being reviewed and permitted through Mercer Island, Community Planning & Development (SHL25-008, SHL25-007, AND SEP25-007) and is subject to SEPA. SEPA

requires that impacts to cultural resources be considered during the public environmental review process. Under SEPA, the DAHP is the sole agency with technical expertise regarding cultural resources and provides formal opinions to local governments and other state agencies on a site's significance and the impact of proposed projects upon such sites.

If archaeological resources are observed, the project is subject to Washington State laws addressing the protection of archaeological sites and Native American burials. The Archaeological Sites and Resources Act (RCW 27.53) prohibits the disturbance of known precontact and historic archaeological sites on public or private lands. The Indian Graves and Records Act (RCW 27.44) prohibits the disturbance of American Indian graves and requires re-interment under the supervision of the affected Indian tribe if inadvertent disturbance by construction or other activity occurs.

PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The project area is located at 8326 Avalon Drive (TPN: 312405-9003), King County, Washington in Section 31 of Township 24 North, Range 5 East of the Willamette Meridian (Figures 1 and 2). The project, as proposed, involves a series of shoreline and dock improvements, including the removal and replacement of existing rockeries, retaining walls, and marina infrastructure (Figures 3 and 4).

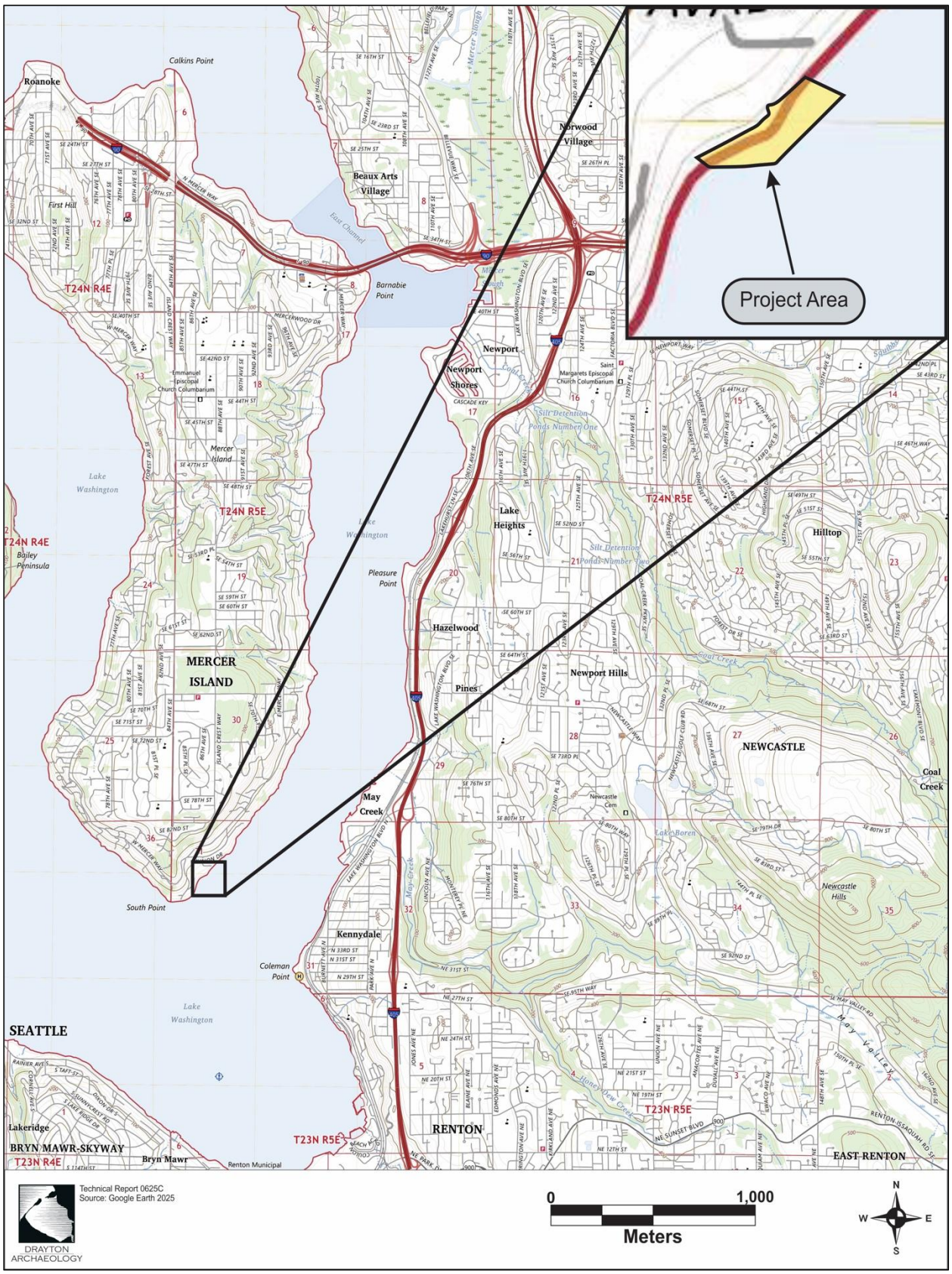

Figure 1. A portion of the Mercer Island (2023), WA 7.5' USGS quad map of the project area.

Figure 2. An aerial image illustrating the project area. area.

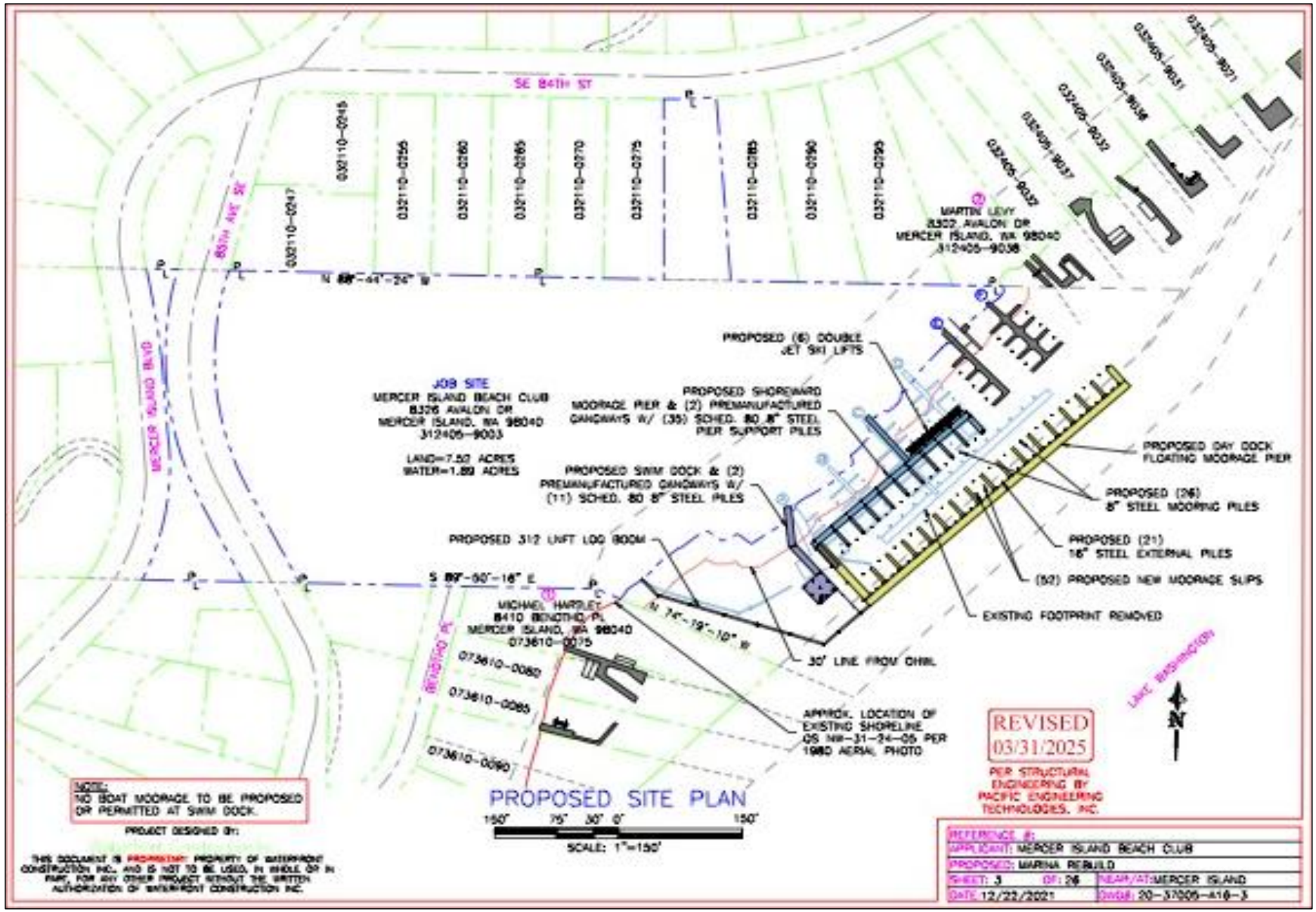

Figure 3. A copy of the project plans (courtesy of the client).

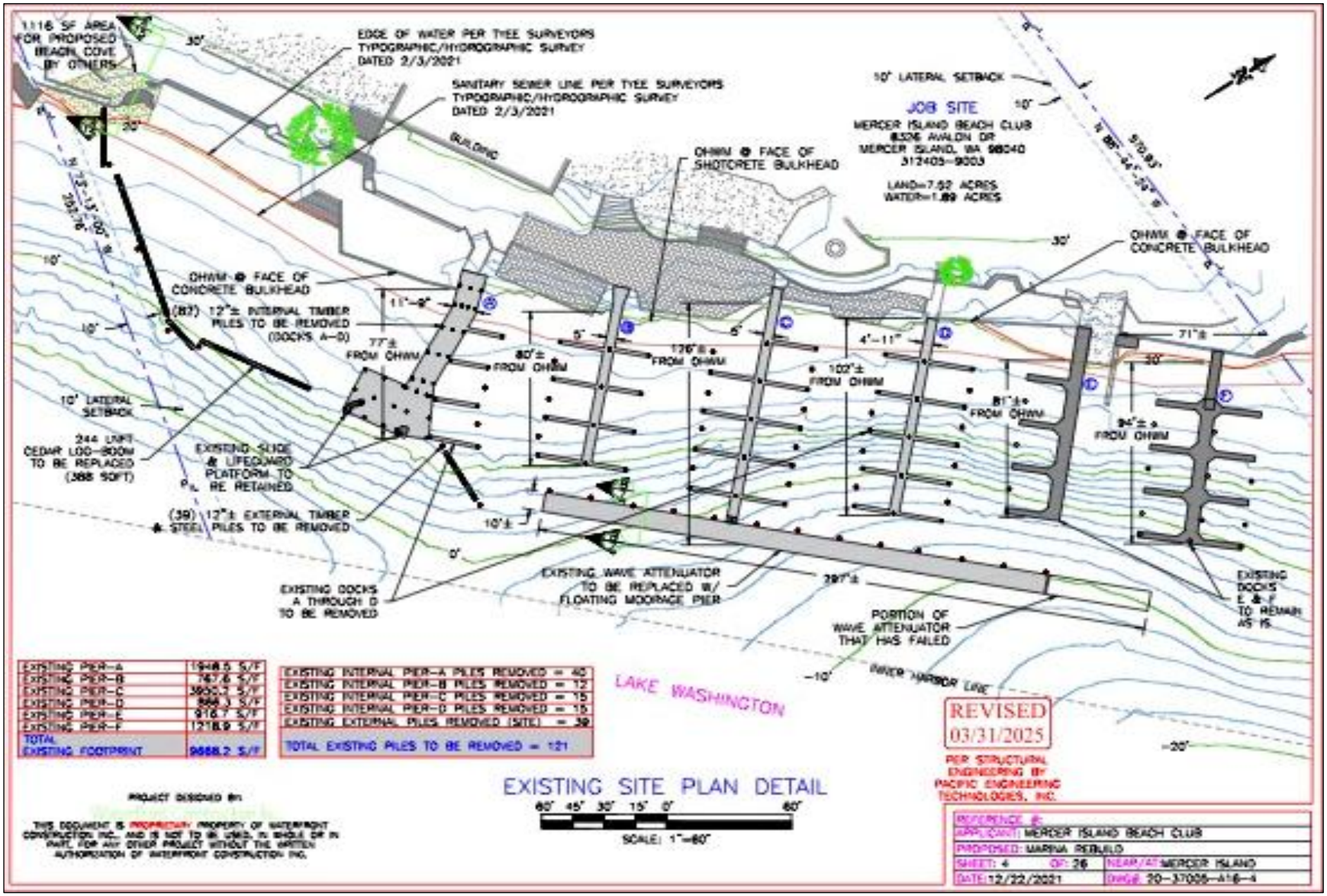

Figure 4. Continuation of project plans (courtesy of the client).

BACKGROUND REVIEW

An investigation of available archives informs us of the potential for encountering cultural resources within project areas. Drayton's review included archives and documents related to precontact and historic environmental and cultural contexts, previously recorded cultural resources studies and site records, and selected published local historic accounts. Archaeological records are obtained from the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's (DAHP) Washington Information System for Architectural and Archaeological Records Data (WISAARD). WISAARD is a restricted-access searchable geographic information system containing locations of previously recorded cultural resources surveys conducted post-1995, archaeological sites, historic sites, National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) sites, and cemeteries and burials. For this project, Drayton reviewed cultural resource archives documented within an approximate 1.6 kilometer (km) or one-mile (mi) radius of the project area.

The following sections detail the environmental, cultural, and archaeological circumstances that inform Drayton's archaeological assessment of the project area.

Natural Environmental Setting

The environmental setting of the region is presented here to appreciate the unique geologic conditions responsible for the landscape formations that affected the lifeways of early inhabitants. Natural geologic conditions also provide baseline context for the cultural resources assessment to better understand how the landscape has been culturally modified by various human activities.

Geology and Topography

The project area lies within the Puget Lowland physiographic province. The Puget Lowland is a physiographic province shaped by at least four (4) periods of extensive glaciation during the Pleistocene (Easterbrook 2003, Waitt and Thorson 1983; Lasmanis 1991). Periodic glaciation depressed and deeply scoured bedrock depositing sediments that were continually reworked as glaciers advanced and retreated. These events resulted in the deposition of glacial till and outwash across much of the region at the end of the last glacial period, the Fraser Glaciation (Easterbrook 2003). The Vashon Stade of the Frasier Glaciation began approximately 18,000 years ago. This ice sheet advanced from British Columbia to just south of Olympia, enveloping the entire Puget Lowland (Porter and Swanson 1998). This tremendous volume of ice scoured the underlying bedrock and helped shape the present-day landscape. The ice retreated to present-day Seattle approximately 13,500 years ago, and large areas south of Seattle were covered by recessional outwash sands and gravel.

As the ice retreated, marine waters entered the lowlands carved out by the glacier, filling the Puget Sound. Seawater lifted the ice causing it to fracture into berg ice. Everson glaciomarine drift deposits dating between 12,500 and 11,500 years before present (BP) were released from the

melting glacial ice and deposited on the sea floor across the northern and central Puget Lowland (Easterbrook 2003). The enormous weight of the ice depressed the land and as the crust rebounded, relative sea levels fell, exposing drift deposits (Clague and James 2002; Easterbrook 2003). The Cordilleran ice sheet advanced during the Sumas Stade of the Fraser Glaciation, ca. 11,600 to 10,000 BP, depositing glacial till and outwash sediments in northwestern Washington (Kovanen and Easterbrook 2002).

The Cordilleran ice sheet disappeared approximately 10,000 years ago, bringing an end to the Ice Age in this region. The melted ice resulted in the transport and deposit of rocks, sand, soil, and debris along the regions scoured by the glacier. These deposited materials came to be called, "great lowland fill" (Booth and Goldstein 1994). Rivers and streams altered the landscape by downcutting through this glacial till and outwash for the next 10,000 years. The thousands of rivers and streams within the Puget Lowland carved out valleys, created deltas, filled bays, and buried low-lying shorelines, creating the modern landscape. The underlying geology in the area consists of Tertiary sedimentary rocks (Lapen 2000). The bedrock is the Padden member of the Chuckanut Formation. The Padden Member consists of sandstone and conglomerate alternating with mudstone and minor amounts of coal dating to the late Eocene (Lapen 2000). These sedimentary rocks formed in a broad river floodplain prior to the formation of the Cascade Mountains (Mustoe et al. 2007).

Soils

The University of California Davis Agriculture and Natural Resources, in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation District, developed an interactive soil survey application that provides a description of native soils in specific locales. According to the UC Davis SoilWeb database, soils within the project area are mapped as Kitsap silt loam and Alderwood gravelly sandy loam.

The Kitsap series consists of very deep, somewhat poorly drained soils formed in glacial lacustrine sediments. Kitsap soils are on flood terraces and terrace escarpments. A typical sediment profile consists of an Ap horizon 0 to 15 centimeters (cm) (0 to 6 inches [in]) of grayish brown silt loam, a Bw1 horizon 15 to 25 cm (6 to 10 in) of pale brown silt loam, a Bw2 horizon 25 to 43 cm (10 to 17 in) of pale brown silty clay loam, a Bg horizon 43 to 81 cm (17 to 32 in) of light gray silty clay loam, and a Cg horizon 81 to 150 cm (32 to 59 in) of light brownish gray silty clay loam (UCDavis SoilWeb n.d.).

The Alderwood series consists of moderately deep to densic (dense glacial till) contact, moderately well drained that formed in glacial drift and outwash over dense glaciomarine deposits. These soils are on glacially modified hills and ridges and have slopes of 0 to 65 percent. A typical pedon consists of an A horizon from 0 to 18 cm (0 to 7.09 in) of brown to very dark grayish brown gravelly sandy loam, a Bw1 horizon from 18 to 53 cm (7.09 to 20.87 in) of yellowish brown to dark yellowish brown very gravelly sandy loam, a Bw2 horizon from 53 to 75 cm (20.87 to 29.53 in) of pale brown to brown very gravelly sandy loam, a Bg horizon from 75 to 89 cm (29.53 to

35.04 in) of light yellowish brown to olive brown very gravelly sandy loam, a 2Cd1 horizon from 89 to 109 cm (35.04 to 42.91 in) of light brownish gray to dark grayish brown very gravelly sandy loam, and a 2Cd2 horizon from 109 to 150 cm (42.91 to 59.06 in) of light gray to grayish brown dense glacial till that breaks to very gravelly sandy loam (UCDavis SoilWeb n.d., NRCS n.d.).

Flora and Fauna

The project area is located within the Western Hemlock or *Tsuga heterophylla* vegetation zone. The Western Hemlock Zone extends from the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska, along the coast and inland western slopes of the Cascade Range of Washington and Oregon states, to Sonoma County in California. Dominating the mild and humid regions along the coast the Western Hemlock Zone is influenced by maritime climatic zones (Franklin and Dyrness 1973). Native vegetation includes Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), and vine maple (*Acer circinatum*). Native Understory vegetation includes bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), black raspberry or blackcap (*Rubus occidentalis*), currants and gooseberries (*Ribes* spp.), deer fern (*Blechnum spicant*), devil's club (*Oplopanax horridus*), huckleberries (*Vaccinium* spp.), Indian plum or Oso berry (*Oemleria cerasiformis*), oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*), red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*) and trailing blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*) (Franklin and Dyrness 1973; Pojar and MacKinnon 1994). Large areas of prairie, oak woodland, and pine forest are distributed throughout the southern Puget Sound basin (Franklin and Dyrness 1973).

There is abundant and variable fauna, both past and present, native to the Seattle-Tacoma area and in the surrounding waters. Marine mammals include orca (*Orcinus orca*), gray (*Eschrichtius robustus*), and humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) whales, sea lions (*Otariidae* spp.), sea otters (*Enhydra lutris*), Dall's porpoise (*Phocoenoides dalli*), and harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*). Over 300 species of seasonal and permanent birds are present. Raptors such as bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), northern harriers (*Circus hudsonius*), and Peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) frequent the inland and shoreline habitats. Shorebirds and waterfowl including snow geese (*Anser caerulescens*), trumpeter (*Cygnus buccinator*) and tundra (*Cygnus columbianus*) swans, great blue heron (*Ardea erodias*), goose (*Branta canadensis*), wood duck (*Aix sponsa*), green-winged teal (*Anas crecca*), mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), northern pintail (*Anas acuta*), gadwall (*Anas strepera*), American wigeon (*Anas americana*), and red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) often find refuge in the salt and freshwater marshes.

Fish, such as cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii*), dolly varden (*Salvelinus malma*), rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), mountain whitefish (*Prosopium williamsoni*), steelhead *(Oncorhynchus mykiss)* pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*), Sockeye (*Oncorhynchus nerka)*, chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha)*, coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch),* and chum salmon *(Oncorhynchus keta)* are diversely available within the Puget Sound River valleys. Additionally, kokanee (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) is found in Lake Washington (Suttles and Lane 1990). Shellfish,

including littleneck clam (*Leukoma staminea)*, butter clams (*Saxidomus giganteus)*, horse clams (*Tresus capax)*, cockles (*Clinocardium nuttallii)*, geoducks (*Panopea generosa)*, bay mussels (*Mytilus edulis*), and native oysters (*Ostrea lurida)* are also widely found within saltwater sources.

In the past, the region supported a variety of large and small terrestrial mammals. Large mammal species include elk /wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*), blacktail deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), mountain lion (*Puma concolor*), and black bear (*Ursus americanus*). Small mammals include rabbits (*Leporidae* spp.), beaver (*Castor canadensis*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), northern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), Townsend's chipmunk (*Tamias townsendii*), and Douglas' squirrel (*Tamiasciurus douglasii*).

Cultural Context

A broad discussion of regional land use in the vicinity of the project area provides contextual information regarding past inhabitants and the activities in which they engaged. It is important to note that many of the name designations applied to Native inhabitants (particularly during contact and early historic periods), are those given by European explorers, Euro-American settlers, and others compiling information for treaty purposes.

Human occupation of the Puget Lowland is well documented in several archaeological, ethnographic, and oral historical records (e.g., Ames and Maschner 1999; Greengo and Houston 1970; Larson and Lewarch 1995; Moss 2011; Nelson 1990; Suttles 1974). British Columbia Northwest Coast Culture traditions are closely related and can be viewed in Borden (1950; 1975), Carlson and Dalla Bona (1996), Fladmark (1982), and Matson and Coupland (1995).

Precontact

Puget Lowland archaeology has traditionally been subdivided into three time periods: the early (approximately 12,000 to 5,000 years BP), middle (approximately 5,000 to 1,000 BP) and late periods (approximately 1,000 to 250 BP) (Carlson 1983). However, calibrated radiocarbon dates from the Bear Creek site (45KI839) in Redmond, Washington date to 12,420 - 12,690 years BP (Kopperl et al. 2015). The date ranges associated with the archaeological time periods of this region are fluid and subject to change when new sites are located and dated.

The early period is characterized by activities to support habitation within subsistence practices along river terraces or outwash channels. Tool technology is commonly characterized by flaked stone tools including fluted projectile points, leaf-shaped points, and cobble-derived tools. These artifacts are often attributed to the Olcott phase, named after the site-type near Arlington and Granite Falls (Baldwin 2008; Kidd 1964; Mattson 1985). As suggested by Mattson (1985) and Kidd (1964), Olcott sites are generally situated away from modern shorelines, where occupation took place along terraces of active water courses of the time. Today, these past habitation areas are often found away from modern rivers, as the course of waterways and channels have shifted over time. Besides the lithic assemblage, little faunal or organic evidence dates to this period - likely a

result of poor preservation due to soil composition and elapsed time. The lack of organic evidence and the abundance of lithic materials unintentionally skew the archaeological record to suggest a specialization of terrestrial hunting practices.

The middle period coincides with a stabilization of the physical environment and climate to modern conditions. The middle period is noted for its increased artifact and trait diversity including a full woodworking toolkit comprised of bone and antler implements, art and ornamental objects, status differentiation in burials, and extremely specialized fishing and sea-mammal hunting technologies (Ames and Maschner 1999; Matson and Coupland 1995; Moss 2011; Wessen 1990). Furthermore, lithic technology evolves to the utilization of smaller notched points and ground stone (Moss 2011; Nelson 1990; Wessen 1990). Shell midden sites first appeared during this period, indicating a transition to a predominantly maritime-based subsistence pattern (Matson and Coupland 1995; Nelson 1990; Thompson 1978). Although structural elements such as post molds have been identified (Moss 2011; Nelson 1990), habitation structures have not been excavated.

The late period is dominated by a settlement pattern along the coastline, streams, and rivers that show evidence of increased fortification (Ames and Maschner 1999; Matson and Coupland 1995; Moss 2011). Rising sea levels and riparian environments supporting large salmon runs allowed salmon to become a predominant food source (Moss 2011; Wessen 1990). The late period is generally recognized by an apparent decrease in artifact diversity. Stone carving and chipped stone technologies nearly disappear, while trade goods (indicating extensive trade networks along the coast and with inland plateau peoples), increase (Moss 2011; Nelson 1990; Thompson 1978).

Ethnographic

The project area is in the traditional territory of the *Dxʷdəwʔabš* or the Duwamish. Conflicting reports exist regarding the extent of the traditional Duwamish Territory. Gibbs reported in 1877 that the Duwamish and Sukwamish occupied Elliott Bay, Bainbridge Island, and a portion of the peninsula between Hood Canal and Admiralty Inlet (Indian Claims Commission 1974). Haberlin and Gunther (1930) report that the Duwamish, *Duχuduwa'bc*, also nicknamed the Renton Indians, lived about the present site of Seattle, with their territory extending from Muckleshoot lands in the south to Suquamish territory in the north. Waterman describes the Duwamish people of the Little Cedar River, as living in the present town of Renton, at the southern end of Lake Washington, but that the name Duwamish refers to people living at a specific locality near a certain spring (Hilbert et al. 2001).

More broadly, people who lived in the area were part of a group known as the Southern Coast Salish which covered a wide swath of Puget Sound, from as far north as the Fraser Valley and south to Mount Rainier (Ames 2003). The Duwamish spoke a southern dialect of Lushootseed (Suttles and Lane 1990), a linguistic group reported to have extended from Samish Bay to the southern extent of Puget Sound, including the major surrounding river drainages. The strongest

cultural ties were held between groups within the same drainage system, though the Lushootseed social network extended throughout the Southern Coast Salish region.

Precontact and ethnographic Duwamish settlements, like other Coast Salish groups, were often located along major waterways and at the heads of bays or inlets where abundant resources of coastal and estuarine environments supported a relatively rich, diverse, and reliable subsistence base. During the winter months, these groups lived in large villages of cedar plank houses at permanent settlements and during the spring and summer in seasonal encampments while fishing, hunting, and plant and berry collecting. Specialized fishing for salmon using traps, prongs, and nets was conducted. Anadromous fish found in creeks would likely have been taken using weirs and willow and stone traps (Greengo and Houston 1970; Suttles and Lane 1990).

According to Suttles and Lane (1990), vegetable foods were more common among the Southern Coast Salish compared to other groups along the Pacific coast, with bracken, camas, and wapato being the most imported. Vegetable foods, along with salmon, waterfowl, shellfish, and cedar bark were processed using a wide variety of stone, bone, antler, and wooden tools. Cedar was heavily used by the Southern Coast Salish by removing large strips of the bark and processing the material down to fibers that could be woven into clothing, mats, blankets, and rope (Suttles and Lane 1990).

Following the arrival of Euro-American settlers in Puget Sound by the mid-1850s and subsequent negotiations between Tribal groups and the United States government in 1855, Tribal groups ceded their territorial lands to the United States government. The Sammamish were thought to have been assigned to the Tulalip (formerly the Snohomish) or Suquamish (Port Madison) Reservation, while other subgroups of the Duwamish were forced to other reservations, including the Muckleshoot (Ruby and Brown 1992).

Ethnographic work conducted by Thomas Talbot Waterman (T.T. Waterman), a prominent northwest ethno-geographer, represents a vast reference of Native American village locations within the Puget Sound region. After studying under Franz Boaz in 1909 and 1910, Waterman spent 1918- 1920 teaching anthropology and sociology at the University of Washington where he recruited students to assist with his ethno-geographic analysis of the Puget Sound (Hilbert et al. 2001). Through his work, Waterman recorded over one (1) thousand names of village locations and place names occupied by the people of the Sound. Waterman never published this work, and in 1998 Vi (*taqw səblu*) Hilbert, Jay Miller, and Zalmai (*ʔəswəli*) Zahir took on the task of transcribing Waterman's work into the Lushootseed alphabet, as well as mapping the place names into a manuscript for publication. Shoreline landmark sites are common, especially those located in protected bays or located at headlands, or at the mouths of streams. People living around Lake Washington were collectively known as *Xacua'bs* or *hah-choo-AHBSH*, or 'lake dwellers'; that is, people of *HAH-choo*, meaning 'a large lake' and referring to present-day Lake Washington. These

people were described as composing an independent social group geographically located between the Duwamish and Snoqualmie (Ballard 1929; Hilbert et al. 2001).

Two (2) ethnographically recorded place names are located on the shores of Lake Washington. *s€ayahus* or "a type of monster," is located opposite the north end of Mercer Island on the shore of Lake Washington, (Hilbert et al. 2001). *s€ayahus* refers to a supernatural monster that lived at this location. *Hwoqwe'yEqaiEks* or "rushes used for a certain kind of matting," is located just north of *s€ayahus* and was the location for a certain type of rush that was smaller than a cattail (Hilbert et al. 2001).

Historic Period

Robert Gray was the first American to explore the coastline of Washington State in 1788 - 1789. Captain George Vancouver of Britain explored the Puget Sound region extensively and claimed the entire territory for the British government in 1792. The Americans and their government largely ignored Vancouver's claim of the territory for Britain (Ritter 2003). The 1803 Louisiana Purchase extended American territory into the Northwest with undetermined boundaries. The Lewis and Clark expedition began the formal effort by the United States to explore and eventually settle the northwest. From 1818 until the early 1840s, the United States and Britain agreed to coexist in the Oregon Territory, which extended from the northern border of California to the southern border of Alaska and included all land west of the Rocky Mountains.

Following closely on the heels of explorers were those in search of profits from the land's abundant resources. Loggers and trappers could easily collect these resources and transport them over water to larger ports. To gain control of the northwest, the British established a northwest branch of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) consisting of French-Canadian and British fur traders. The HBC became Britain's legal extension in the territory. They operated from their base at Fort Vancouver, near present-day Vancouver in Clark County, as well as at Fort Nisqually, established in 1833. Fort Nisqually served as a halfway point between Fort Vancouver and trading posts in Canada, serving as a trading location with many Puget Sound groups (Ruby and Brown 1992; Kirk and Alexander 1995).

The late 1830s brought with it many Americans migrating into the northwest from areas in the east because of economic depression and poor farming conditions. In 1850, the Donation Land Claim Act (DLC) was enacted by Congress to increase the American population in the region. The Land Act allowed any man over the age of 18 years to claim 320 acres of land if it was cultivated for at least four (4) years. If the man was married, he could claim an additional 320 acres. In the period of just a few years, the Northwest experienced a relative increase in population (Avery 1965). Opportunities for logging, gravel mining, and farming brought settlers to Lake Washington from the 1860s onward (Harvey 1993). Workers at logging camps and lumber mills processed timber into lumber and shingles, subsequently shipped by steamer to Seattle. By 1900, nearly all the old-growth timber around Lake Washington was gone (Davis 1973).

Lake Washington underwent significant changes in the early 1900s. In 1912 the Cedar River was dredged by a commercial waterway district to stabilize the channel. Before channelization, the Cedar River flowed into the Black River but would periodically flood and migrate northward into Lake Washington. To control flooding and stabilize the channel the Cedar River was dredged and permanently diverted into Lake Washington and the former adjacent wetlands were filled with slag imported from the Renton coalmines. Following the in-filling of the former estuary, the area has been extensively developed and now serves as an industrial area.

Though many attempts to create a channel from the freshwater to the saltwater had been undertaken during the previous decades, it was not until the early 1900s that Mercer's idea to link Lake Washington to Puget Sound finally came to fruition as construction began in earnest on the locks and canals (Williams 2017). Water levels in the lakes needed to be at equal elevations, resulting in Lake Washington being lowered by nearly three (3) meters (m) or nine (9) feet (ft) through the canal and the Montlake Cut. Numerous boatyards sprang up along the shores of Lake Union at the time, becoming one (1) of the top wooden boat-building centers in the world (Becker 2007). The grand opening celebration of the Lake Washington Ship Canal and Government Locks occurred in 1917 (Williams 2017), providing more industrial opportunities to arise in the area. Between 1907 and 1911, and again from 1928 to 1931, efforts were conducted to regrade Denny Hill, transforming the gentle valley into an open plain.

Cultural Resource Management Inventories and Documented Resources

Previous cultural resources studies conducted in the vicinity of the subject project were reviewed to provide archaeological context for this assessment. The review of past work, along with the specific topographic and ecological contexts of a particular property contributes to the construction of expectations for, and determining the probability of, encountering cultural resources.

Previous Cultural Resources and Sites

A review of the DAHP's WISAARD database was conducted on June 4, 2025. According to the available data on WISAARD, six (6) cultural resources studies are recorded within a 1.6 kilometer (km) or one-mile radius of the project area with the five (5) most relevant surveys noted in Table 1. These studies were largely conducted to satisfy regulatory compliance related to infrastructure and development projects. Additionally, two (2) archaeological sites are located within the same search radius.

Table 1. Cultural resource studies recorded within an approximate 1.6 km (one-mile) radius of the project area.

Citation	Report Title	Results
Alsobrook et al. 2022	Cultural Resources Assessment for the Kennydale Gateway Project, Renton, Washington	Negative
Ives et al. 2016	Cultural Resources Survey for the Washington State Department of Transportation's I-405: SR 169 to I-90 Improvements Project, King County, Washington	Negative

Citation	Report Title	Results
Kelly 2012a	Cultural Resources Assessment for the Quendall Terminals Redevelopment Project, Renton, King County, WA	45KI1107
Kanaby 2009	Archaeological Assessment, City of Renton Hawk's Landing Project, Renton, Washington	Negative
Bowden et al. 1997	Cultural Resource Assessment Jag Development, King County, Washington	Negative

The historic site 45KI1107, located approximately 1.33 km (0.84 miles) northeast of the project area. The site was recorded by Kelly (2012b) who describes the location as a disused dock and wharf located on Lake Washington east of Mercer Island in relative proximity to I-405. Cultural material associated with the site consists of two features (the wharf and the t-docks) which were run by Reilly Tar & Chemical Company with the wharf built 1916 and the t-dock in 1928.

The next site, 45KI0814, is a historic dry dock located 1.52 km (0.94 miles) northeast of the project area in Lake Washington in relative proximity to I-405 and 45KI1107. The site was described as a sunk wooden dry dock used by the US army for World War 2 and were decommissioned after the end of the war. The docks were salvaged then demolished. (Major 2008)

National Registered Historic Places (NRHP)

There is one (1) NRHP-eligible properties within a 1.6 km (one-mile) radius of the project area, 45KI586 is located 1.5 km (0.93 miles) north of the project area in relative proximity to Pioneer Park. Lakeview School was originally built in 1918 in a t-shaped one-story building that contains two classrooms. An associated two room teacher's cottage lies in the northwest border of the property. The schoolhouse was used as a community center after 1941 when two school districts were merged. (Garfield 1988)

Recorded Cemeteries

There are no cemeteries recorded within a 1.6 km (one-mile) radius of the project area.

CULTURAL RESOURCE EXPECTATIONS

Based on the preceding background review, Drayton concludes that the project is located within an area of low to moderate probability for historic-era or precontact cultural deposits, structures, or isolated items. Drayton concludes that the project area is within an area of moderate probability of encountering cultural materials based primarily on the lack of cultural resource surveys conducted on Mercer Island. While some historic cultural sites have been observed on the eastern shore of Lake Washington, none have been observed within Mercer Island itself, other than the one historical property.

If precontact materials are present, they may include remnants associated with habitation, subsistence practices, or ceremonial activities. Shell midden, vestiges of temporary habitation areas and dwellings, lithic scatters, trails, hearths, fire-modified rock, faunal remains, and other

materials associated with precontact life may be represented. Historic-era remnants of early Euro-American settlement and subsequent occupation are also considered.

FIELD INVESTIGATION

Drayton employs standard archaeological field methods to assess the potential for cultural resources within the project area. Field methods include a thorough visual reconnaissance of the property and subsurface examination of soils. Visual reconnaissance includes a detailed surface survey of the areas proposed for ground alteration (or other impact) to examine existing ground disturbances and locate surficial cultural materials or structures with historic or archaeological importance or cultural concern. Subsurface examination through the excavation of shovel probes or large-scale mechanical excavation provides a detailed sample of soil conditions to assess potential for, or presence/absence of, buried archaeological deposits. Subsurface excavation is typically dependent upon considerations of the landform, topography, project proposal, and geologic conditions.

Drayton's archaeological assessment was conducted on June 10, 2025, by Senior Archaeologist Alex Berry. Weather conditions were sunny and warm with temperatures in the low 80s. A visual inspection of the project area was conducted to examine the terrain, observe existing ground disturbances, and locate surficial cultural materials. The project area consists of approximately 172 meters (564.3 feet) of coastline, where a range of dock and shoreline improvements are proposed (Photos 1 – 6). No cultural materials were observed during the visual inspection of the project area.

Photo 1. Western overview of the project area.

Photo 2. Southern view of current coastal configuration.

Photo 3. Southwestern overview of project area.

Photo 4. Northeastern view of an unobscured portion of coastline adjacent to proposed dock work.

Photo 5. Northeastern overview of proposed rockery and retaining wall improvement location.

Photo 6. Southwestern overview of proposed rockery and retaining wall improvement location.

Most of the project area was obscured by the existing marina structure, limiting the potential for a more comprehensive subsurface investigation. However, four (4) shovel probes were excavated in accessible locations where ground disturbance is anticipated (Figure 5). Standard shovel probes consist of cylindrical pits measuring approximately 40 cm (15.75 in) in diameter. No predetermined target depth is set for probing, as depths are based upon geologic conditions, water table, degree of disturbance, and professional judgment. Ideally, shovel probes are considered complete when at least 20 cm (approx. 8 in) of sterile soils are observed or an intact stratum of glacial deposits is encountered. Soils excavated from probes were screened through a shaker screen with quarter-inch hardware cloth. The shovel probes were completely backfilled, and the locations marked with a GPS to compose a site sketch map.

Soil profiles were consistent with the previously described soils mapped for the area. Probes excavated contained grayish brown silt loam overlying grayish brown sand (Photo 7). A description of the soil sequence and composition of each shovel probe is described fully in Appendix A. No cultural materials were encountered during field investigation.

Figure 5. An aerial image illustrating shovel probe locations.

Photo 7. Example of soil profiles observed during subsurface survey of the project area.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drayton's cultural resources assessment consisted of a thorough background examination, field investigation, and production of this report. A professional archaeologist who meets or exceeds the criteria set forth in RCW: 27.53 conducted this review and concluded the project is in an area of moderate probability for cultural resources. This assessment is based on the property's proximity to known archaeological sites, topography, and ecological context. No cultural materials were observed during the field investigation. Based on the results of this review, Drayton recommends that the project proceed without further archaeological oversight.

Shovel testing is employed as a cost-effective means to evaluate subsurface conditions and locate buried cultural resources; however, it is not exhaustive. Therefore, no shovel testing regimen is 100% accurate in recovering or locating buried cultural resources. Regardless, Washington State law provides for the protection of all archaeological resources under Washington State Revised Codes of Washington (RCW) Chapter 27.53, Archaeological Sites and Resources. Be advised that the unauthorized removal, theft, and/or destruction of archaeological resources and sites are strictly prohibited. Further, this statute provides for prosecution and financial penalties, including consultation and the recovery of archaeological resources, for those found in violation. Additional legal oversight is provided for Indian burials and grave offerings under RCW Chapter 27.44, Indian Graves and Records. RCW 27.44 states that the willful removal, mutilation, defacing,

and/or destruction of Indian burials constitute a Class C felony. Washington legal code, RCW 68.50.645 - Duty to Notify, provides a strict protocol for the notification of law enforcement and other interested parties if any human remains, regardless of perceived patrimony, are encountered**.** The following section, Inadvertent Discovery Protocols, outlines the recommended procedures that property owners, project managers, construction crews, and others responsible for work should follow if cultural materials are encountered during project activities.

INADVERTENT DISCOVERY PROTOCOLS

Archaeological Resources

If archaeological resources (e.g., shell midden, faunal remains (bones), stone tools, historic glass, metal, or other materials) are observed during project activities, all work in the immediate vicinity must stop and the area secured. The project archaeologist must be contacted immediately to inspect the materials and contact relevant parties. An assessment of the materials and consultation with government and tribal cultural resources staff is a requirement of Washington law. Once the situation has been assessed, steps to proceed can be determined.

Human Burials, Remains, or Unidentified Bone(s)

If human remains or indeterminate bones are encountered, work must stop immediately. The area surrounding the remains must be secured and of adequate size to protect them from further disturbance until the DAHP provides notice to proceed. The discovery of any human skeletal remains must be reported to law enforcement immediately. The county medical examiner/coroner will assume jurisdiction over the human skeletal remains to determine whether those remains are forensic or non-forensic. If the county medical examiner/coroner determines the remains are non-forensic, the State Physical Anthropologist at the DAHP will assume jurisdiction over the remains. The DAHP will notify appropriate cemeteries and all affected tribes of the disturbed remains. The State Physical Anthropologist will determine whether the remains are Native or Non-Native origin and report that finding to appropriate cemeteries and affected tribes. The DAHP will handle all consultation with the affected parties as to the future preservation, excavation, and deposition of the remains and authorize a timeline for the continuation of work.

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APPENDIX A: SHOVEL PROBE INDEX

DEPTH BELOW SURFACE (CM)	SOIL DESCRIPTION	RESULTS
ALB1		
0 – 37	Grayish brown silt loam with moderate gravel and root content	Negative
37 – 44	Grayish brown highly compacted silty clay loam with low subrounded cobble and gravel content	Negative
LAT/LONG: 47.526490, -122.223523		
Note: probe terminated due to rock impasse		
ALB2		
0 – 27	Grayish brown sand and gravel	Negative
27 – 35	Dark yellowish brown silty sand	Negative
35 – 60	Blueish gray silty clay	Negative
LAT/LONG: 47.526569, -122.223350		
ALB3		
0 – 29	Grayish brown highly compacted sandy silt loam with moderate roots	Negative
29 – 57	Grayish brown highly compacted silty clay loam with low subrounded cobble and gravel content	Negative
LAT/LONG: 47.526630, -122.223262		
Note: probe terminated due to compaction		
ALB4		
0 – 11	Brown silt loam	Negative
11 – 33	Grayish brown highly compacted silty clay loam with low subrounded cobble and gravel content	Negative
33 – 80	Grayish brown sand and gravel	Negative
LAT/LONG: 47.527197, -122.222206		