

Frees Residence Variance
Indomus Architects LLC
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Sept 16, 2021

To: County of Kittitas

Re: Request for Variance
Property: 7 St Andrews Drive, Cle Elum, WA 98922
Applicant: Christina and Jay Frees, property owner

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SEP 17 2021

Kittitas County CDS

PROPOSED PROJECT NARRATIVE

The proposed project is a new single family residence, primarily 1 story with a second story above the garage. This trapezoidal lot is located on the north side of St Andrews Drive. It is in a Rural-5 zoning with a required front yard setback of (25') twenty five feet, and required side and rear yard setbacks of (15') fifteen feet.

This lot slopes down significantly from SE to NW direction. The topography elevation goes from a high of 2,046' feet on the SE corner of the site next to the road down to 2,030' on the NW corner of the site next to the golf course. Along the road, this site slopes from 2,046' feet to 2,034' feet for a total of (12') twelve foot drop.

The proposed house has a footprint of 3,178 sq. feet and an attached garage of 1,228 sq. feet. The elevation of the house in order to balance the cut and fill is proposed to be at 2,035 feet. This balance means that the house is significantly lower than the road, but it also keep the house from being too high in elevation off of the golf course. The driveway entrance is proposed to be on the SW corner of the site

The primary views on this site are the mountains at Snoqualmie Pass to the west and northwest. The house is designed to take advantage of these views. With that in mind, the garage is then proposed to be tucked away on the SE corner of the buildable portion of this lot. The house is mostly situated near the front setback line to maximize the distance of the rear of the house to the golf course. To gain access to the garage the garage is rotated along the angled east property line by the driveway that is in the front portion of the yard. This driveway is proposed to have board-formed concrete retaining wall to retain the higher grade between it and the slope next to the road. The concrete retaining walls rises up to a total of 7.5 to 8' tall from the driveway. The top of the wall is to follow the existing land contour between it and the road, and so is not visible from the road.

The purpose of this variance is to gain approval to build this "L" shaped (in plan) retaining wall. Note that most of this wall is under 7' high on the side facing the house, and is only 6-8" tall facing the street.

VARIANCE CRITERIAS

1. **Variance Criterion #A** – *Unusual circumstances or conditions applying to the property and / or the intended use that do not apply generally to the other property in the same vicinity or district, such as topography*

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With the exception of this lot #7 and adjacent lot #8 to the east, nearby lot lots do not have the significant topography slopes. The house on lot #8 was built with a driveway with a significant driveway rock retaining wall in order to bridge the grade differences between the road and the house on the lot

- Variance Criterion #B*** – *Such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant possessed by the owners of other properties in the same vicinity*

Note that

17.08.520 Structure.

"Structure" means that which is built or constructed, an edifice or building of any kind, or any place of work artificially built up or composed of parts joined together in some definite manner. Fences that are 7 feet or less in height are excluded from this definition. (Ord. 2015-010, 2015; Res. 83-10, 1983)

The 4 examples presented in this narrative appears to be structures. The stone pilasters could be construed as a structure but not as a fence due to its depth. In any case the subject retaining wall for 56 of it's linear distance is 7' or less in height facing the house and about 28' of it facing the house is only at most 1' higher than the 7' fence max. height. Also note that from the street, only the very top 6"-8" inches of the wall is visible, and due to the downward slope, very little of this wall if any will be visible.

It seems like the masonry fence in supporting case #2 at 331 Hermitage Dr is more impactful visually than the retaining wall that the Frees are requesting a variance for, and that the rock wall in supporting case example #1 is definitely a structure and not a fence, responding to the same topographical challenges as the Free's site next door.

Denial of the variance will mean a significant portion of the allowable buildable portion of the lot area will need to be utilized for driveway and not for the house. This will result in significant redesign of the proposed house on a very diminished building able lot area. Other owners, due to their relatively flat lots are able to use the front setback area for their driveways and access to the garages and preserving the buildable lot area for the house. It is every advantage for the Golf Course community to have this house setback as much as possible from the golf course as well.

- Variance Criterion #C*** – *That authorization of such variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property in the vicinity*

Typically and historically front yard setback requirements have been minimize any type of impeding, tall and noticeable elements in the front yard, such as decks, tall fences, sheds for example. In this case the retaining walls are sunken down relative to existing grade in order to retain a much lower driveway. Therefore the view impact to the surrounding neighbors are very minimal if any at all. The slope from the top of bank near the side of the road is also downward. This wall will hardly be noticeable if at all

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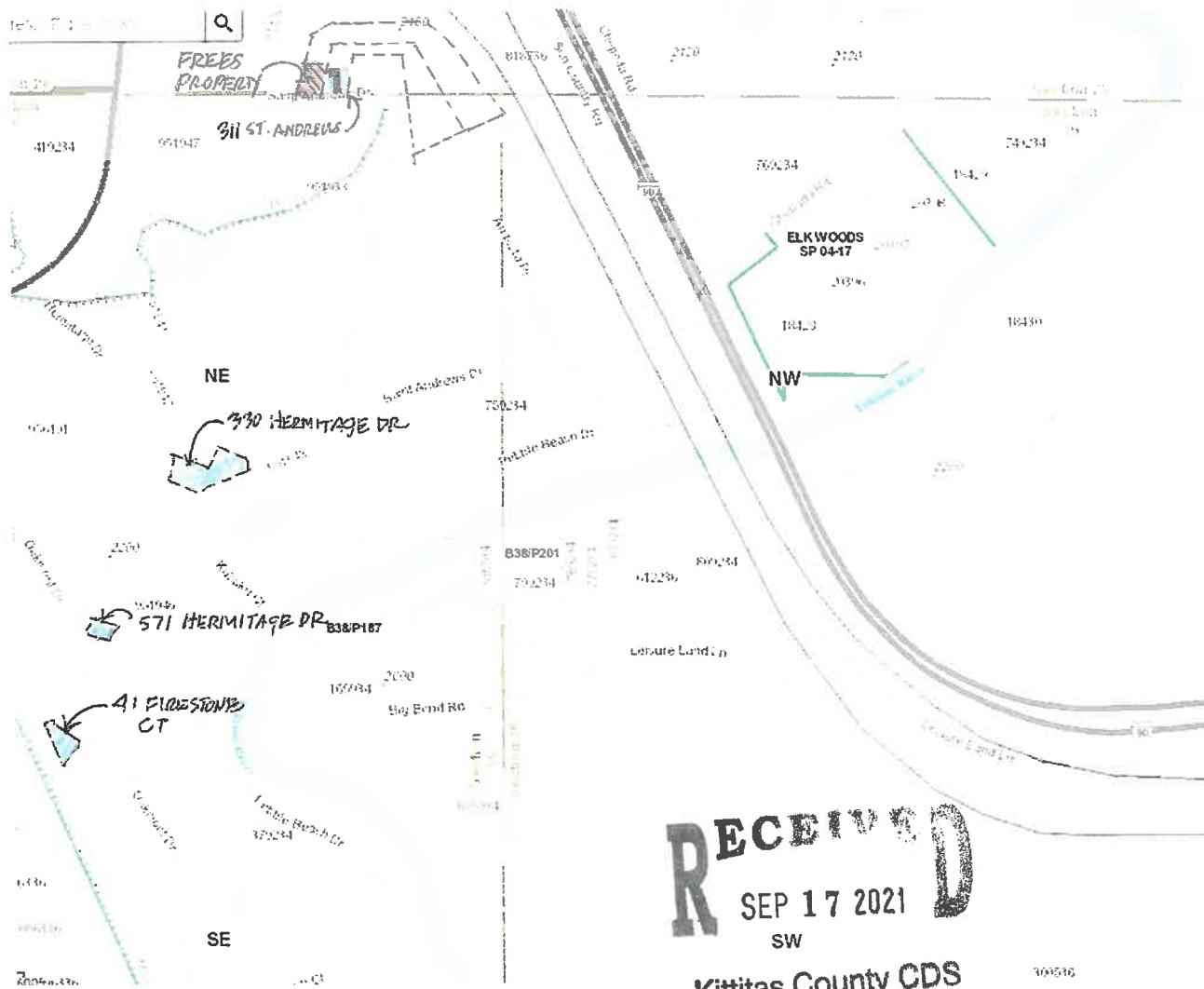
4. Variance Criterion #D – *That the granting of such variance will not adversely affect the realization of the comprehensive development pattern*

The comprehensive development pattern will not be adversely impacted by the granting of this variance. The house and its volume will remain within the buildable areas outside of the setbacks. The retaining wall is sunken down low and will not be visible from the street and will help the house blend in with the other homes on the golf course by ensuring that the yard grade around the house is consistent and close to that of the golf course grades. This design and site plan will also ensure that the garage and doors don't become the focus point or an architectural distraction for this house.

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NEIGHBORHOOD MAP

The location of property where a variance is desired is labeled as "FREES PROPERTY" in orange poche. This map also shows 4 other cases where there appears to be structures in the front right of way in blue poche

The other houses nearby are located at:

- 311 Saint Andrews Dr
- 330 Hermitage Dr
- 571 Hermitage Dr
- 41 Firestone Court



Supporting Case No. 1

331 SAINT ANDREWS DR.
CLE ELUM

View from street. Rock retaining wall starts at boulder to the left and continues to the front of the house in picture on lower left.

Property line starts approximately 15' from edge of pavement (photographer is standing on pavement but pavement is not pictured).



The front yard setback is 25' which would include a significant portion of rock wall shown on lower left hand photograph. Setback goes through near left of the two smaller trees behind the black trailer

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Supporting Case No. 2

330 HERMITAGE DR, CLE
ELUM

View from street, clearly shown in foreground. Pair of stone pilasters are clearly in the front setback for this property and appears to include portion of adjoining wall structures



View of north stone wall, approximately 4' tall.



Supporting Case No. 3

40 & 41 FIRESTONE CT,
CLE ELUM

View from cul-de-sac. Stone
Pilasters are on or near front
property lines and well in the
front yard setbacks for both
properties



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Supporting Case No. 4

571 HERMITAGE DR, CLE
ELUM

View from street. Stone Pilaster appears to be in front setback. In this case, the pilaster appears to be within the property lines

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Thank you very much,

Eric Hess, NCARB
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