EXHIBIT "A"

Request for Text Amendment

To: Sandy City Planning Commission & City Council

Subject: Modernization of Building Height Standards for Steep Slope Topography

Affected Section: Sec. 21-20-2 (Residential Building Setbacks and Building Heights)

I. Purpose and Necessity

The current Sandy City building height calculation, which utilizes an average finished grade, works well for traditional mostly flat-lot residential developments. With many of the remaining residential lots in the city on more steeply sloped lots, this "one-size-fits-all" approach has become technically detrimental to modern hillside construction and is less effective in encouraging build massing that is compatible with the natural landscape and other properties views.

Strict adherence to average grade on steep slopes often forces:

- Excessive Earthwork: Massive grading and retaining walls to artificially lower a "finished" grade to meet height requirements.
- Design Inefficiency: Homes that fight the natural terrain instead of responding to it.
- Visual Massing Issues: "Wall-on-the-hill" effects where downhill façades become disproportionately tall to balance the average.

This amendment seeks to align Sandy City with neighboring jurisdictions—such as Park City, Cottonwood Heights, and Salt Lake City—which utilize existing grade or point-by-point measurements to protect natural topography.

II. Proposed Code Language

Add a new subsection to Sec. 21-20-2 (or the relevant hillside overlay section) as follows:

(X) Height Exceptions for Steep Slope Residential Lots.

For any residential lot where the predominant slope within the building envelope is thirty percent (30%) or greater, the following alternative height measurement standards shall apply to encourage terrain-responsive design and minimize grading:

1. *Measurement Baseline: At the applicant's discretion, building height may be measured from the existing (natural) grade at any given point of building coverage rather than the average finished grade.*
2. *Maximum Height Envelope: No habitable portion of the structure shall exceed thirty-five (35) feet when measured vertically from the existing grade directly below.*

3. *Downhill Massing Safeguard: To protect neighborhood character and viewsheds, no downhill-facing façade may exceed a maximum vertical height of thirty-five (35) feet as measured from the lowest adjacent existing grade to the highest wall top plate.*
4. *Prohibition of Artificial Grade Increases: Existing grade shall not be artificially raised through the use of fill or retaining structures for the purpose of increasing the allowable height envelope.*

III. Consistency with the General Plan

The Sandy City General Plan and Sensitive Area Overlay Zone emphasize the protection of the city's natural assets, specifically the mountain bench. This amendment aligns with those goals by:

- Promoting Sensitive Land Design: Encouraging "terrain-responsive" architecture that follows the natural "flow" of the mountain rather than requiring massive excavation.
- Reducing Scarring: Minimizing the need for expansive retaining walls and artificial grading, preserving the natural visual character of the Sandy bench.
- Preserving Open Character: Utilizing existing grade as a baseline ensures that homes do not appear unnaturally "lofted" above native terrain.

IV. Why This Benefits the General Public

Updating the height methodology for steep slopes provides tangible community benefits:

- View Protection: By measuring height from the *existing* grade at every point, buildings are incentivized to step down the hillside, preventing the "wall-on-the-hill" effect that blocks views for neighbors.
- Infrastructure Sustainability: Reduced grading leads to less soil erosion and lower impacts on city storm-drainage systems caused by massive site disturbances.
- Predictability and Transparency: Clear, objective rules for slopes over 30% provide neighbors and developers with a defensible standard, reducing the need for contentious variance requests or administrative appeals.

V. Shared Safeguards and Implementation

To ensure this amendment is not used to circumvent density or massing intentions, the following safeguards are integrated:

- Anti-Manipulation Clause: Existing natural grade cannot be artificially raised through fill or debris for the purpose of gaining additional height.

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- Static Zoning Protections: This amendment does not increase allowed density, lot coverage, or unit counts; it only adjusts the vertical envelope relative to native topography.

- Standard Setbacks: All existing residential setbacks and usable land requirements remain in effect to ensure adequate separation between structures.

- Administrative Review: Any project utilizing this calculation must undergo formal review to verify slope percentages and "Existing Grade" benchmarks.

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Comparisons: Existing vs. Proposed Code

To help the City Council visualize why the current code is technically detrimental on 30% or greater slopes, we compare the "Averaging" method with the "Existing Grade Envelope" method.

1. Existing Method: Average Finished Grade

Under current code, height is measured from the average finished grade to the peak of the roof.

- **The Conflict:** On a steep 30% slope, the "average" point sits deep in the middle of the footprint. To stay under 35 feet at that "average" point, the downhill side of the house often ends up appearing 45–50 feet tall relative to the ground.
- Additionally, when designing to an average finished grade, architectural design is reduced with height problems to surrounding neighbors and grading manipulation to maximize height.
- **The Result:** A bulky, "top-heavy" appearance on the downhill side and a perverse incentive to use massive amounts of fill on the uphill side to raise the "average".

EXHIBIT A - AVG HEIGHT PRODUCES WALLS HIGHER THAN 35' AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN IS REDUCED.

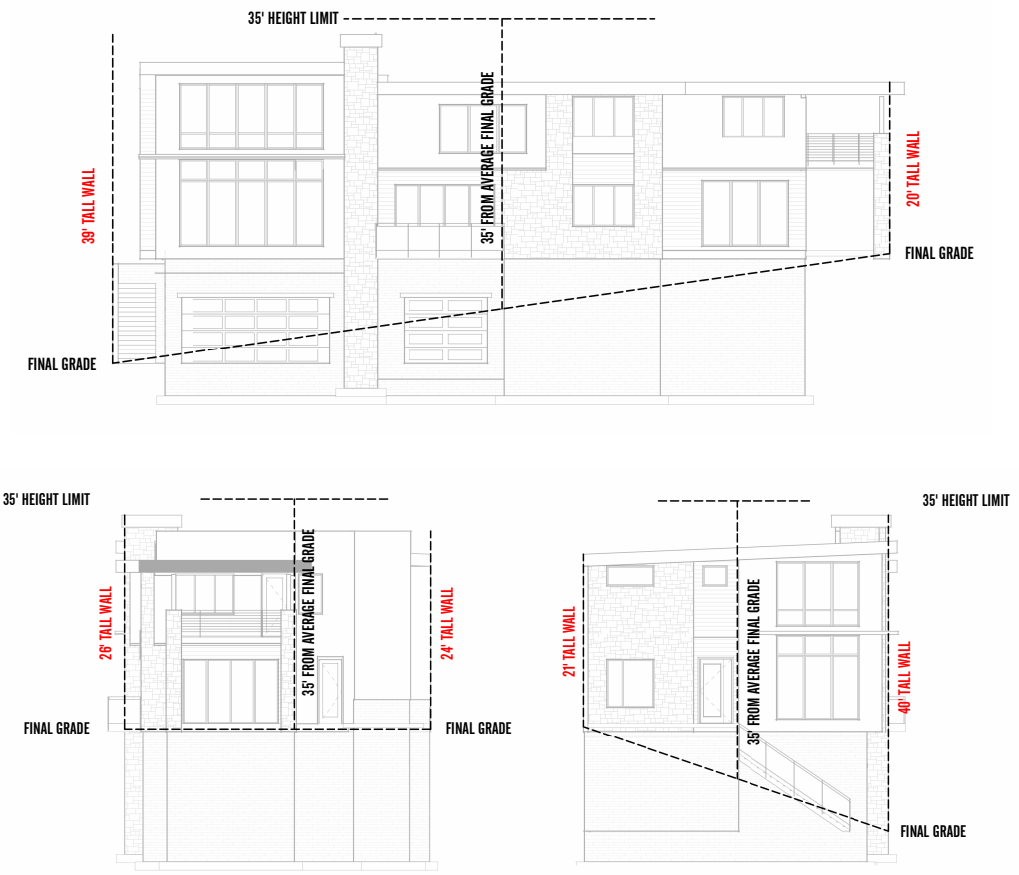

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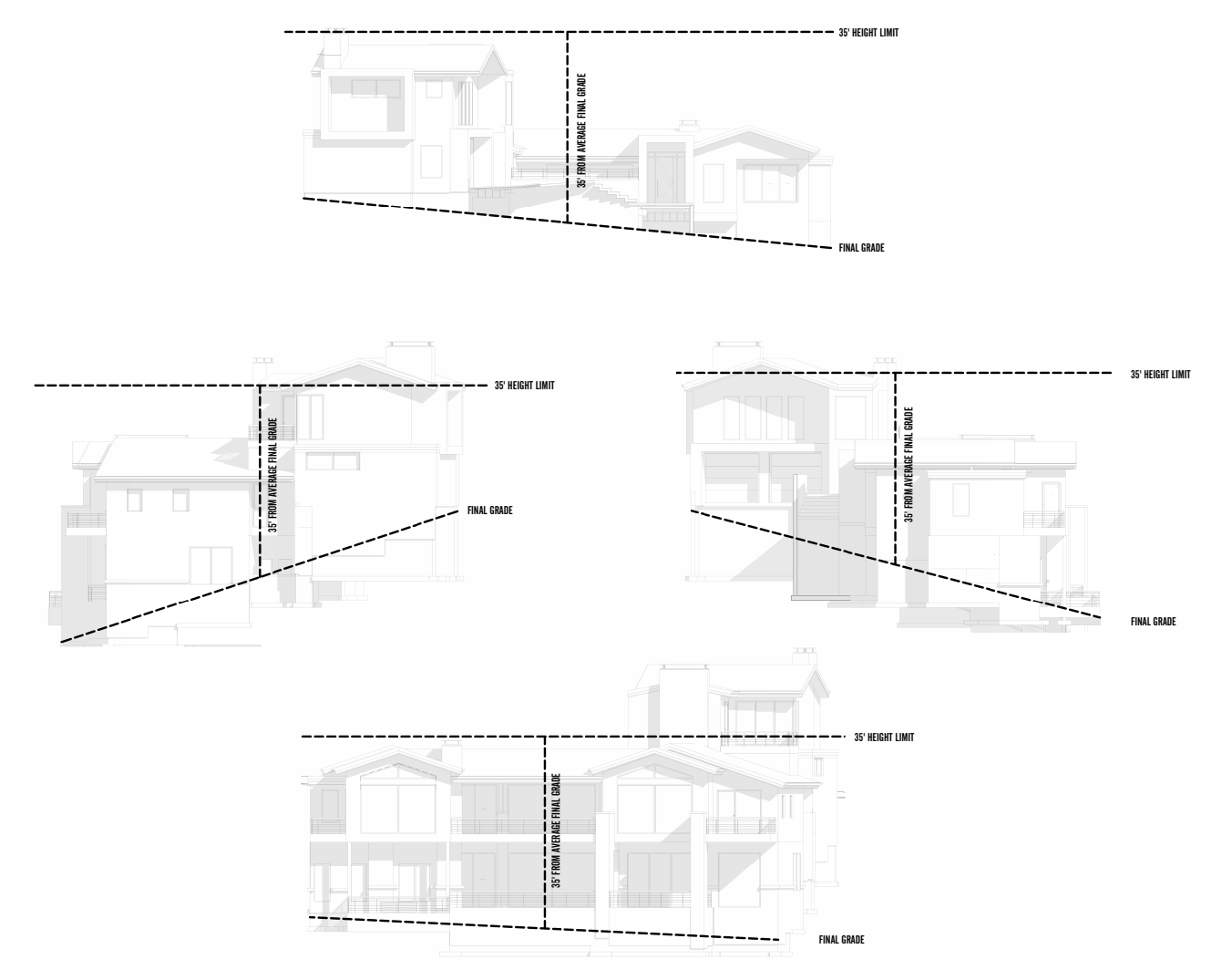
EXHIBIT B - AVG HEIGHT DISCOURAGES SLOPE CONCIOUS ARCHITECTURE.



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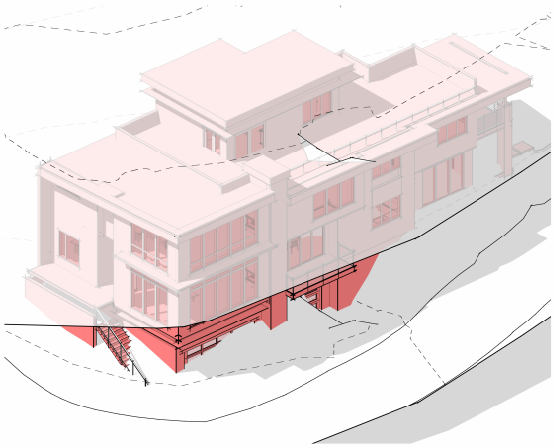
2. Proposed Method: Existing Grade Envelope (for 30%+ Slopes)

The proposed amendment adopts a "Point-by-Point" or "Envelope" approach similar to surrounding jurisdictions.

- **The Concept:** A 35-foot vertical "limit line" is projected upward, mirroring the exact contours of the natural mountain. All habitable space must fit entirely within this terrain-responsive envelope.
- Height is further confirmed using topography and roof height markers.
- **The Result:** The structure is required to "step" or terrace down the hill. This keeps the roofline parallel to the mountain, significantly reducing visual mass for neighbors looking up or down the slope.

EXHIBIT C - 35' VERTICAL ENVELOPE ALLOWS FOR BETTER SITE CARE AND SLOPE CONCIOUS DESIGN



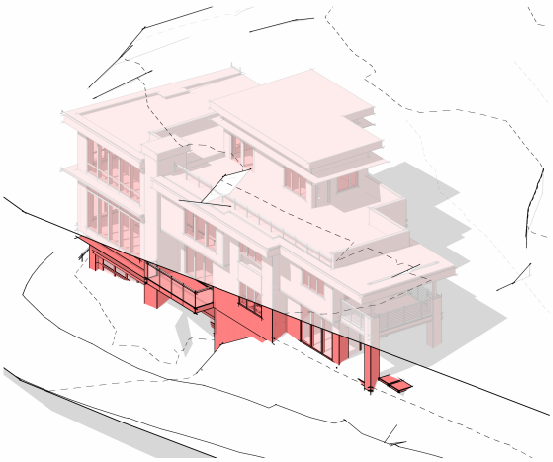


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EXHIBIT D - SLOPE CONCIOUS DESIGN

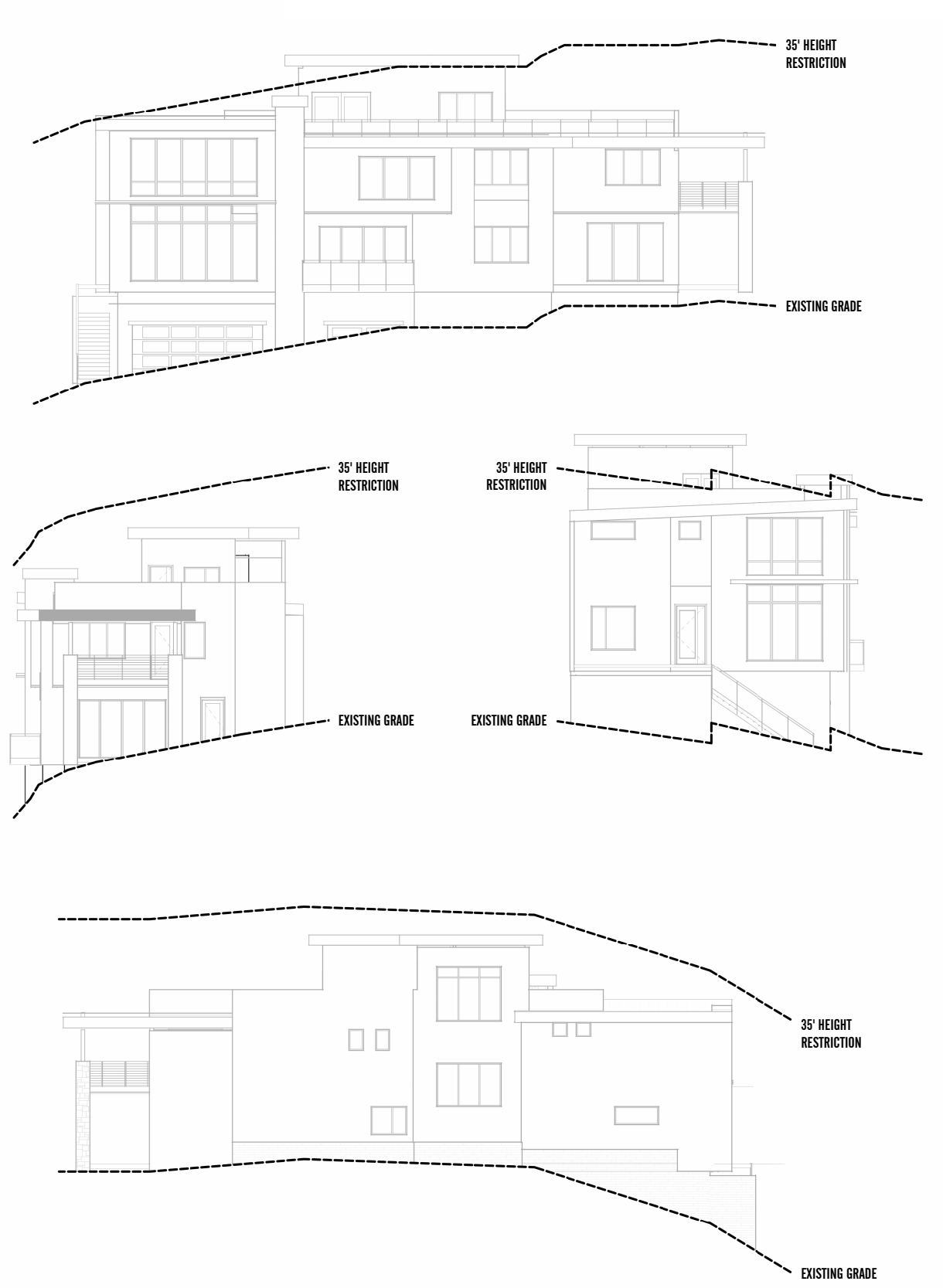

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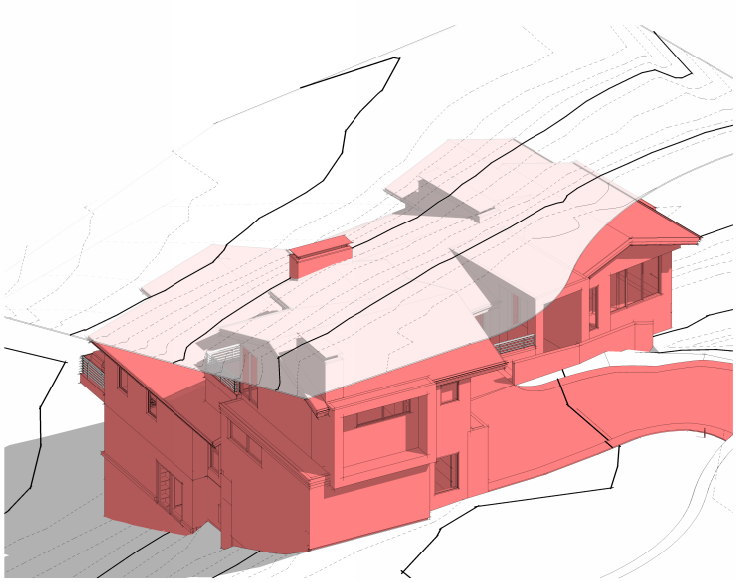
EXHIBIT E - SLOPE CONCIOUS DESIGN CONT.



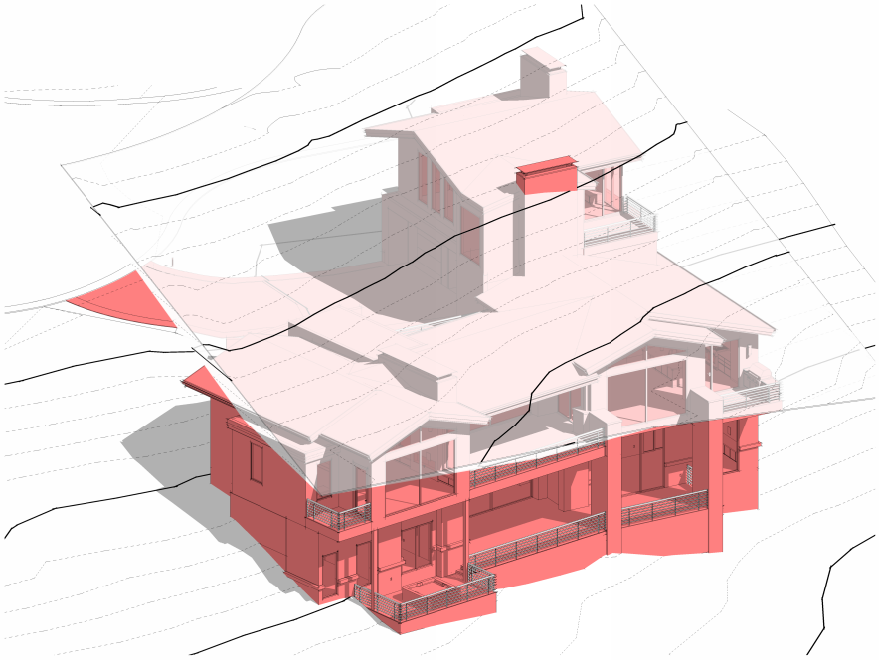


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EXHIBIT F - SLOPE CONCIOUS DESIGN CONT.

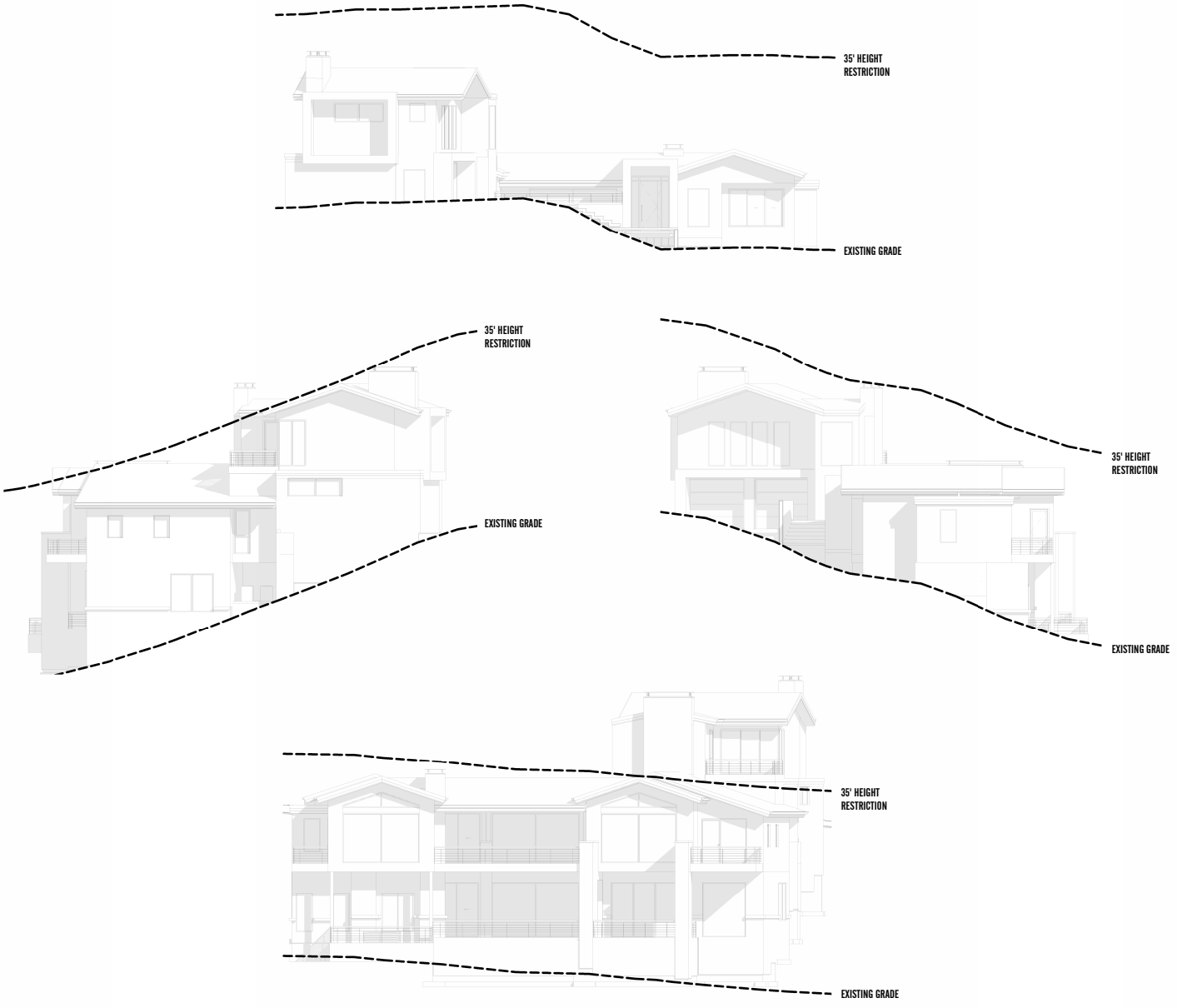

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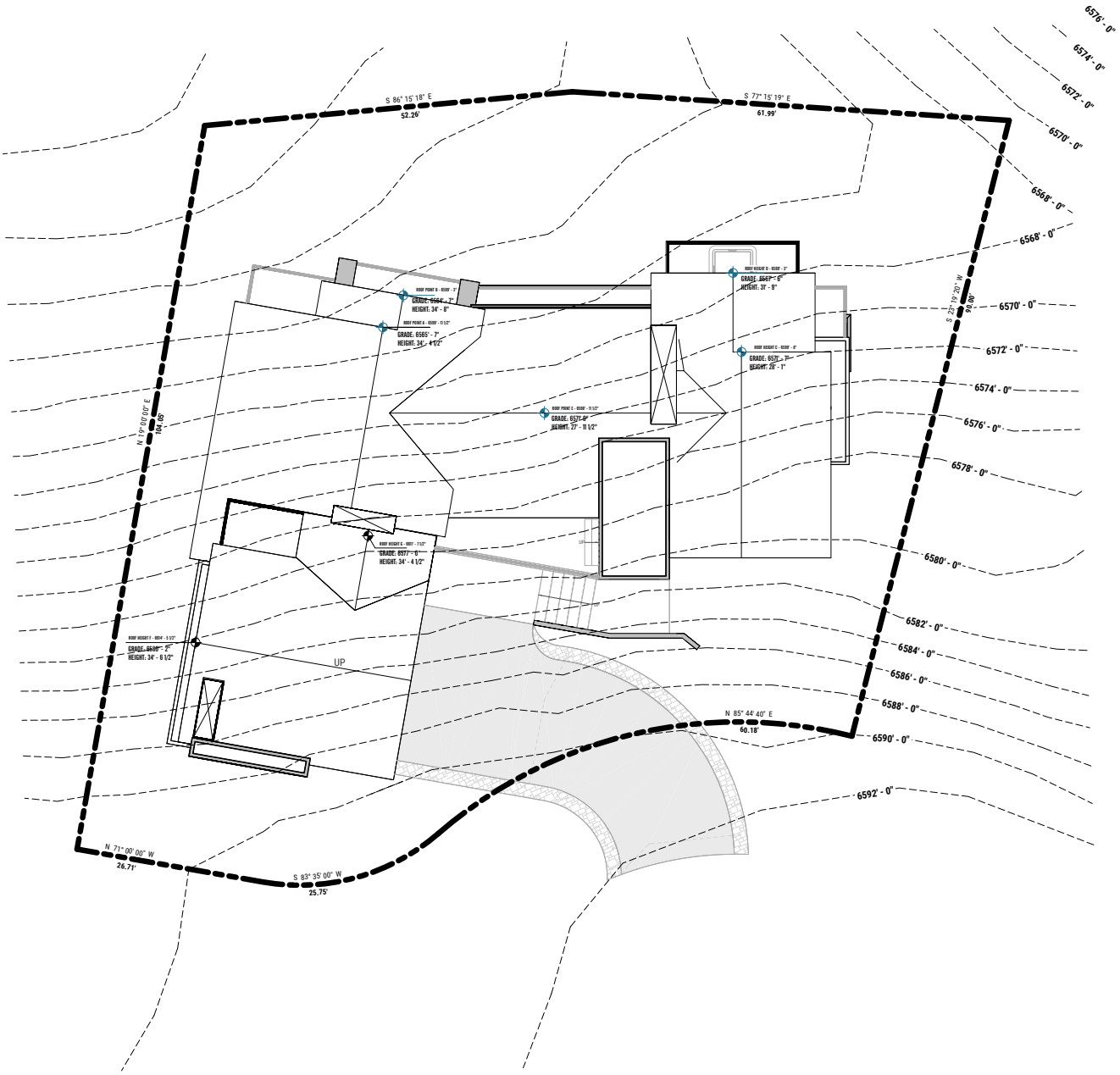
EXHIBIT G - HEIGHT CALCULATION PLAN



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EXAMPLE HOMES CURRENLTY ON SALE