

**Helen Soderholm, Peter Buchanan**

5724 Eglinton Street

Burnaby, BC

V5C 2H6

► **City of Burnaby – Board of Variance**

City of Burnaby Works

Burnaby, BC, Canada

V5C 1M1

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**Dear Board Members:**

This letter is submitted to support an application for variance for an over height fence built on the western border of our property, 5724 Eglinton Street (Drawing 1).

**Description**

The fence was erected to replace English laurel and cedar hedges that were approximately 12 feet in height (when trimmed) and up to 12 feet in width, and formed the western boundary of our lot. The laurel hedge ran along the boundary from the front of the lot to a line corresponding approximately to the southern edge of our house, the remainder of the hedging was cedar. The hedges were situated on our property, with some portions of the hedges (estimated 2 to 3 feet in places) extending over to the adjacent property (Air Photos 2004, 2006.)

The present fence consists of eleven 6-foot high solid prefabricated cedar panels topped with vegetation supports consisting of a 2-foot high diagonal lattices and a 10 ½ inch high trellises constructed of 2-inch by 2-inch cross pieces (Drawing 2). The fence was built in three phases starting from the north: five panels in 2007, two panels in 2013 and the final four panels in 2014. Our lot slopes downhill to the south from 4% to 13% , (Drawing 3 shows slopes per panel and year constructed). The greatest slopes are at the panels constructed in 2014: 11% to 14% .

The five panels built in 2007 now support climbing vines and a flower and shrub garden adjacent to the fence. (Photo 1). There is also now a garden of vines and shrubs adjacent to the remaining panels built in 2013 and 2014 (Photos 2 and 3).

*Handwritten signature*

## **Design Rationale and Construction Phases**

We purchased our home in 2002. In 2007 we decided to remove the overgrown English laurel hedges. The hedges covered up a significant portion of our side yard, impeded access along the side of the house, and cost hundreds of dollars and many hours of our time every year to trim, (Air Photos 2004, 2006.) We paid for all costs associated with trimming and maintaining the hedges. English laurel is an extremely vigorous growing plant and required extensive trimming, sometimes as much as 3 feet of growth per year. The English laurel will regenerate after a close trimming, while cedar hedges continue to expand in width as they cannot be trimmed further than the green outer leaves.

The 2007 work proceeded as follows: we removed the laurel from the northern end of our lot to a point approximately coincident with the southern edge of our house, leaving a large holly tree in place. We erected five 6-foot high panels with vegetation support of the lattice and trellis at a cost of approximately \$4000. The fence was placed on the boundary between the houses, and the remaining boundary north of the houses was planted with a new garden (Air Photo 2008).

The vegetated over height portion of the fence was included to replicate the privacy of the removed hedges and shields our view of the basement windows of the adjacent house from our kitchen window (Photo 4), a concern expressed by the residents of that house. In addition, the more porous lattice and trellis would provide more light penetration, especially during the winter. We also planned to improve the appearance and habitat value of our side yard from an unsightly mono species hedge under grown with lawn to a varied and productive strip of flowering vines and shrubs and perennials, providing an increase in plant variety, foraging and refuge.

We stained our side of the new fence a natural colour, the residents next door offered to stain their side; we provided them with stain.

In 2013, approximately 20 feet of the cedar hedge fell over as it was being displaced by a large tree in the adjacent property and when snow accumulated in the top and middle of the hedge (Air Photo 2010, also seen in Air Photo 2004)). We erected two additional panels to replace this piece of the cedar hedge, following the style described above and, at the request of the residents next door, repaired one of the panels constructed in 2007. The total cost was \$1500. At that time, we planted a temporary garden adjacent to these two new panels of the fence (Photos 5 and 6). Photo 5 shows the extent of the tree from the adjacent property (which has since been cut back extensively as seen in Photo 3). The lateral extent and poor condition of the remaining portion of the hedge can also be seen in Photo 6 and in Air Photo 2010.

In 2014 we undertook a remodeling of our back yard and removed the remaining 35 feet of hedge which was some 12 feet wide and was primarily bare branches, posing a fire hazard and an eyesore. We extended the fence in the style of the previous sections, and built and planted a large border garden with vines, shrubs, perennials and native shade plants (Photo 7).

### **Hardship to Remove**

Our primary intent in replacing the overgrown hedges with this style of fence was to maintain the privacy afforded by the hedges while constructing a more attractive and easily maintained boundary. The footprint of the fence and vegetation is a reduction in the height and width from that of the previous hedges. In addition, we have added vegetation that now provides improved habitat and diversity of flowering plants and shrubs.

The steep slope of the southern portion of our yards, the heights of our houses, and the lack of another form of boundary (alley, buildings etc. ), means a strictly 6-foot fence, i.e without the lattice and trellis, would mean a significant loss of privacy (Photo 8). If the lattice and trellis were removed, the scale of the fence would be disproportionate to the surrounding houses, hedges and trees, which can also be seen in Photo 8 (the fence is still lower than the existing and removed hedge heights). In addition, removing the entwined vines and lattice could damage the structure and integrity of the fence, necessitating more costs to us in repair and/or replacement.


When the lattice and trellis become vegetated with the planted vines and shrubs, the sight lines of the previous hedge will be restored with a much more attractive and diverse boundary and will provide much needed shade in our south facing lots. The fence does not interfere with the primary views of both properties, which is to the south over Deer Lake Park and Metrotown (Photo 8).

We constructed this fence and the adjacent gardens entirely at our own cost and with our own effort, and in good faith. We designed the fence in response to the concerns and requests of the residents of the adjacent property, and repaired a portion when asked to do so. We supplied them with stain when they told us they would rather apply it themselves than allow us access to their side of the fence. It was only late in 2014, when the construction of the remaining four panels was contracted out and underway, that they decided that the entire fence was not to their liking.

We ask that we be granted a variance to the 6-foot height by-law in that; the solid portion of the fence does adhere to those height restrictions, and that the additional height of the lattice and trellis are in proportion to the surrounding buildings, hedges and trees and help to replace the privacy provided by the removed hedges as described above. If we are permitted the variance, we will trim the posts to the top of the trellis to reduce the maximum height of the fence to 8 feet 7 inches.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

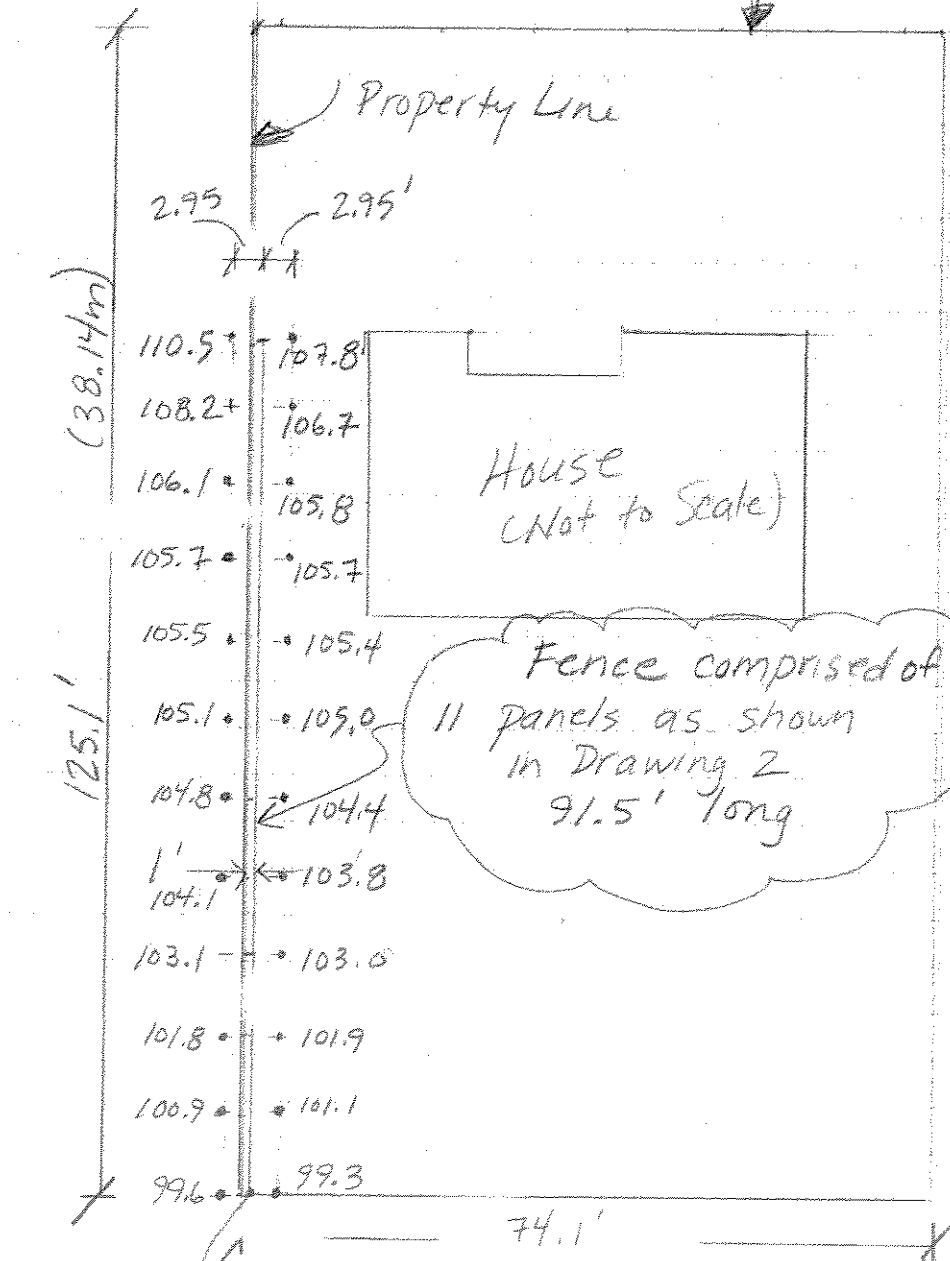
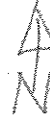


Helen Soderholm, Peter Buchanan  
Property Owners  
5724 Eglinton Street

5724 Eglinton St  
Drawing 1

74.2'  
(22.61 m)

Property  
Line



125.1'

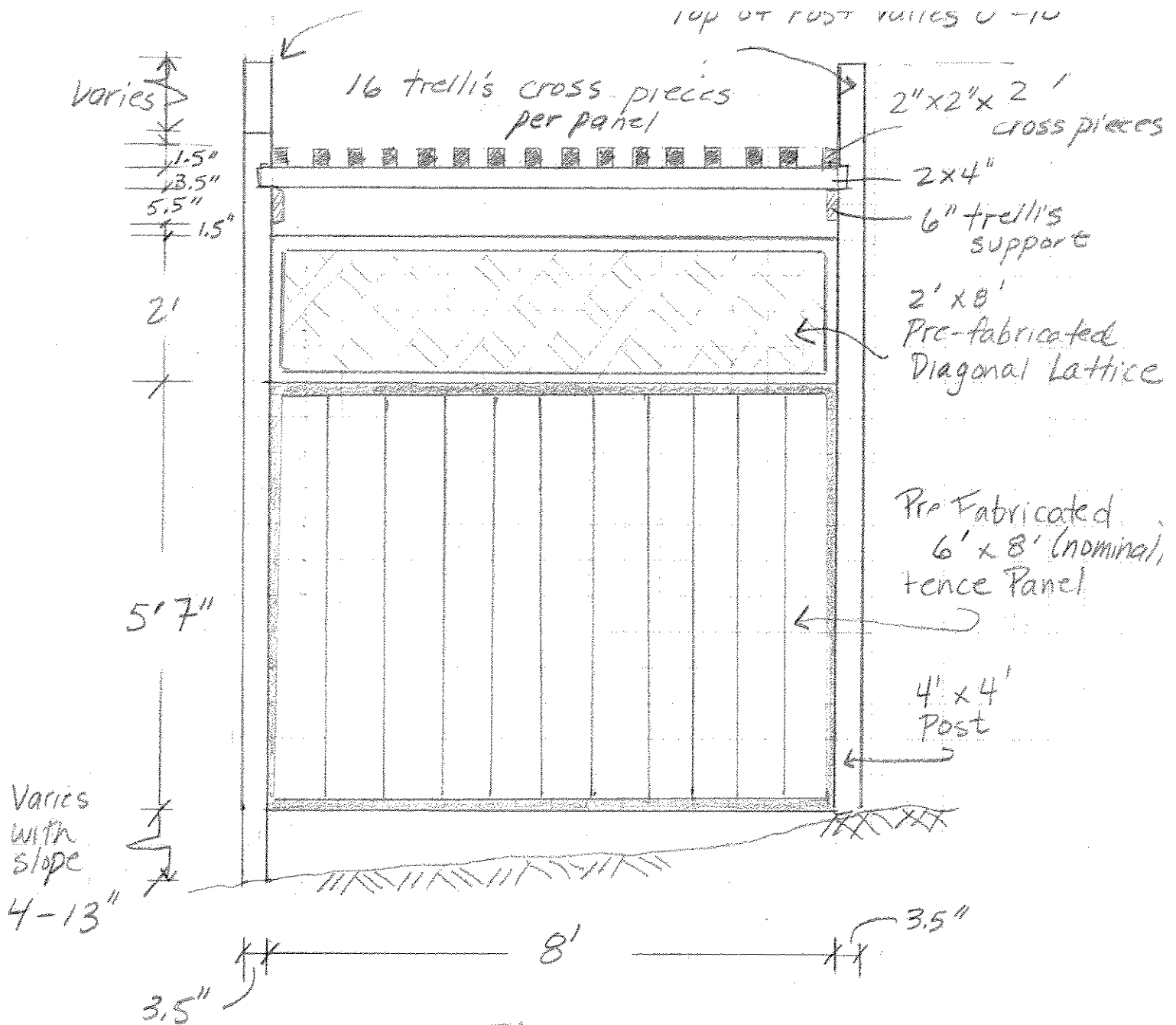
N.B. Trellis does not  
overhang property  
line.

Revised  
May 22, 2015

let elevation  
at btm of last post  
= 100.00 ft  
(at grade)

Scale  
1" = 20'





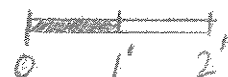
Elevation

Typical Fence Panel, Lattice  
Trellis and Posts

5724 Eglinton St Drawing 2

Revised May 22, 2015

Scale  
1" = 2'

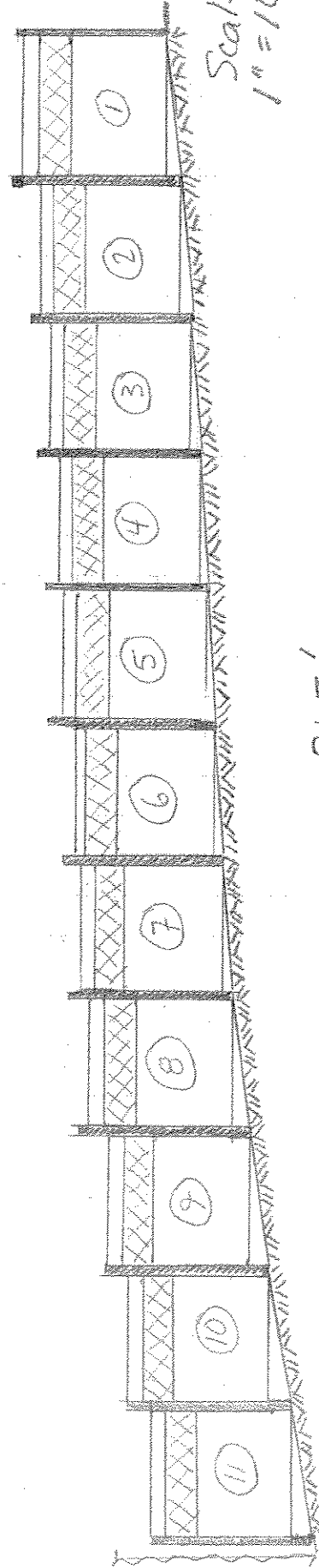


5724 Eglinton St. Fence Elevation, Looking West

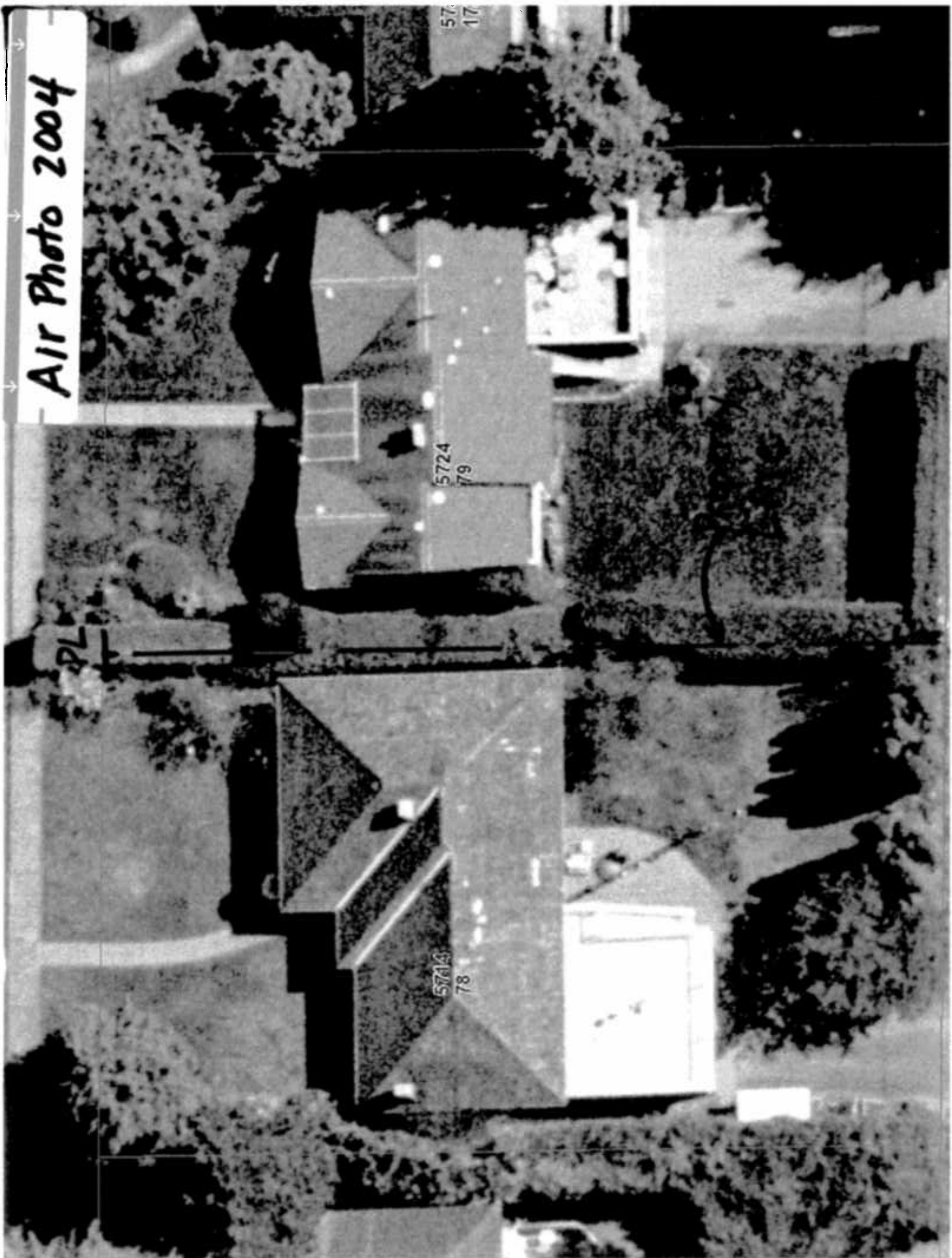
Showing Grade Per Panel

Drawing 3

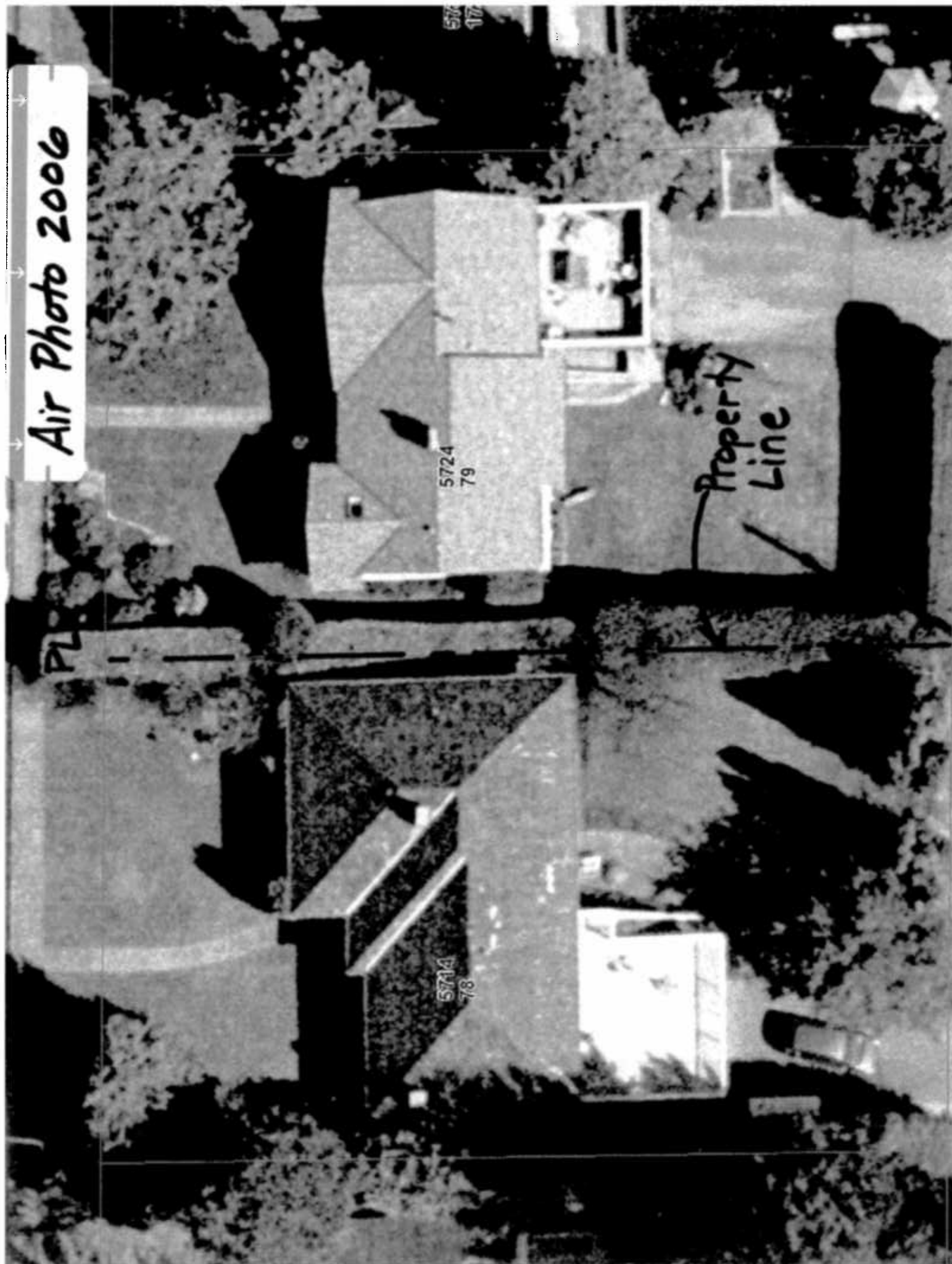
Panel No.	Year Built	Grade (%)	Top of Post ht (in)
1	2007	9%	6"
2	2007	5%	8"
3	2007	6%	8"
4	2007	4%	10"
5	2007	4%	10"
6	2013	6%	10"
7	2013	6%	8"
8	2014	11%	8"
9	2014	14%	8"
10	2014	11%	0
11	2014	13%	0



Air Photo 2004



Air Photo 2006



5724 79

5724 79

5714 78

Property Line



Air Photo 2008

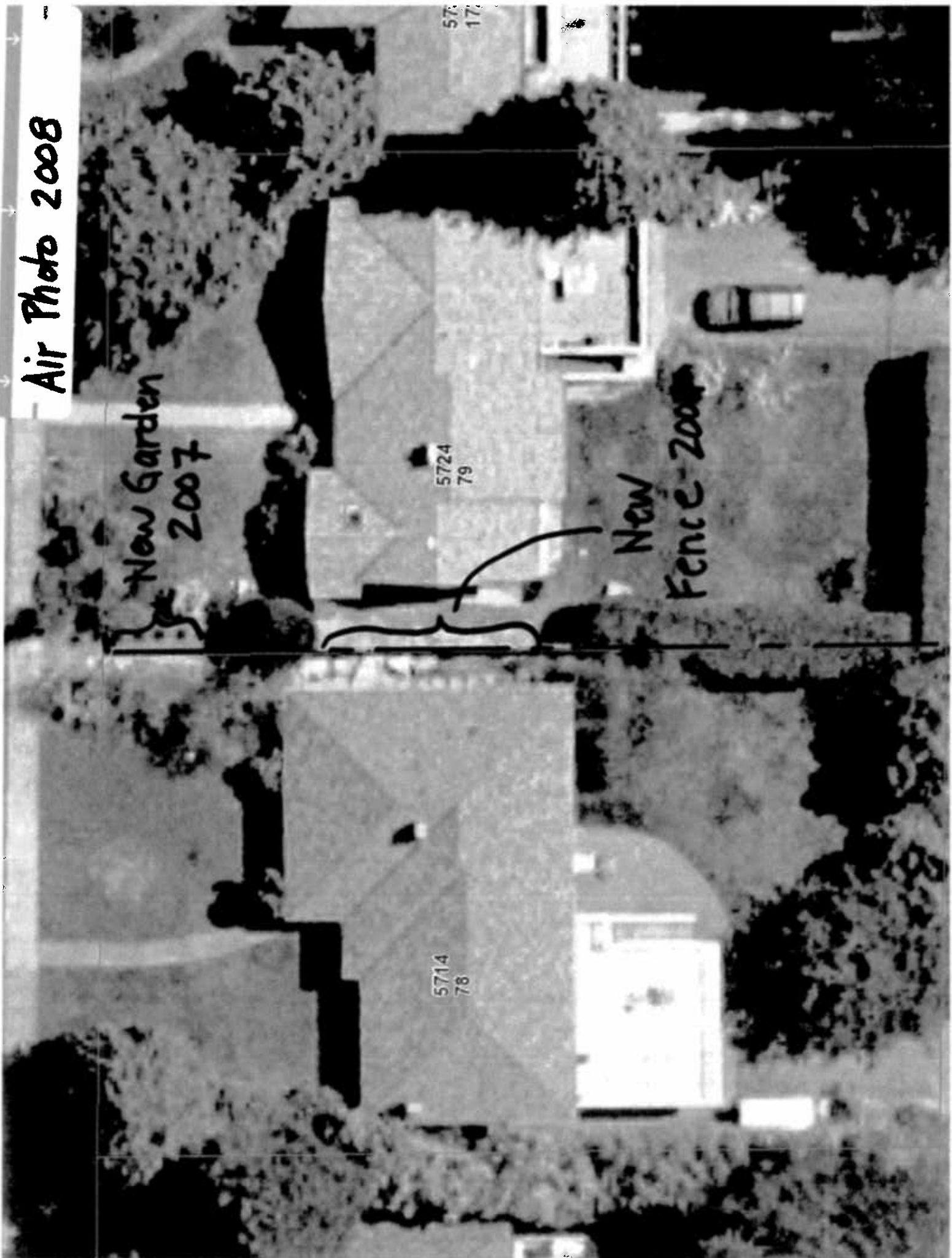
New Garden  
2007

5714  
78

5724  
79

5734  
17

New  
Fence 2008



Air Photo 2010



Photo 1





Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

26 04 2015 19:34





Photo 5



Photo 6





Photo 7



Photo 8

