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Mariposa County Planning Dept.

**Addendum**  
to  
**Vallecito Project Viewshed**  
**Report**

**Catheys Valley**  
**Mariposa County**  
**California**

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**March 28, 2014**

## Addendum to Vallecito Project Viewshed Report

### A. Introduction

The "Vallecito Viewshed Report" was written and submitted to the Mariposa Planning Department to discuss and address the issue of Visual Quality for the **Vallecito Project** as outlined in the Mariposa County General Plan. This addendum is being submitted at the request of the Planning Department to supplement the report.

### B. Purpose of the Addendum

The purpose of this addendum is to render a profile view of the viewshed for hypothetical housing locations. The intent is to give the reader a visual sense of the amount or degree of "sky-lighting" of residence for each lot situated within the viewshed from Highway 140 as seen from "Viewsite #2", illustrated in the Vallecito Viewshed Report.

THE LOCATIONS DEPICTED WITHIN THE DRAWINGS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY. THE LOCATIONS ILLUSTRATED OFFER A CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE VIEWSHED BY THE HOME SITE. THIS ADDENDUM DOES NOT PROPOSE THAT THE HOME SITE LOCATION DEPICTED IS THE SITE OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT BUT ARE FOR HYPOTHETICAL PURPOSES ONLY. THE ACTUAL HOME SITE LOCATION, HOUSE SIZE AND HOUSE DESIGN SHALL BE DETERMINED BY THE FUTURE PROPERTY OWNER GOVERNED BY THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MARIPOSA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN AND UNDER THE REVIEW OF THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT.

### C. Site Selection Criteria

In the past, some housing developments have clustered home sites on steep slopes or have located individual homes on ridge tops, sky-lighting the residence from multiple view sites below. Because of the proposed lot size, the rolling topography, oak tree habitat and wetland reserves, the **Vallecito Project** avoids the clustered appearance that gives the appearance of "over-developed" and the undulating terrain precludes a home site that dominates the surrounding viewshed. Of the proposed 26 lots (four commercial and twenty-two residential), 8 lots with hypothetical home sites fall within the viewshed from viewsite #2 along Highway 140. These 8 lots are lots #24, #25, #26, #9, #10, #11, #12, and #13. Of the 8 lots within the viewshed, three lots offer generous home sites on level to near level ground. These three lots are #24, #25, and #26. These three lots are immediately adjacent to the existing driveway encroachment from Highway 140. These three lots also have a back drop of slope that precludes the residence from being skylighted. The remaining 5 lots could potentially fall under the requirements of Mariposa General Plan section 5.3.02 "Residential Land use Classification" paragraph E(2) "Hillside and Ridge Top Design". For the hypothetical home site depiction offered by this addendum, only the lots that fall under review by this section shall be the subject of discussion. These lots are #9, #10, #11, #12 and #13. The reasons why these 5 lots may be subject to Section 5.3.02E(2) is that

the home site may be on a “ridgeline” and the home site may have some degree or portion of a residence above the horizon line. An issue for discussion and one that is open to interpretation is “what constitutes a ridgeline”. There is no definition within the General Plan. The topography for the residential lots within the viewshed of the **Vallecito Project** consists of rolling terrain with a horizon line but not a prominence or true hilltop. This rolling topography continues to rise as the terrain approaches Guadalupe Grade. The issue of defining a “ridgetop” is so controversial that during the hearings for the Catheys Valley Community Plan, the Board of Supervisors eliminated proposed wording that would regulate this subject.

Lot #16 is not within the viewshed of viewsite #2.

The hypothetical house depicted in the following illustrations has a footprint dimension of 50 foot X 50 foot square giving the single story residence a size of 2,500 square feet. These are the **RED** squares. The height to the eaves is 10 feet and to the roof apex is 15 feet. The two story house depicted is 20 feet high to the eaves and 25 feet high to the roof apex with an approximate square footage of 5,000 sq. ft. These dimensions are for hypothetical purposes only and do not represent the style or size of any future housing. This design also does not take into consideration of a house design that follows or fits within the natural landform. The septic reserve area is depicted by the **BLUE** box with an “X”.

The criteria for the home site location with the following illustrations is:

- Home site is in close proximity to proposed access road.
- Home site is located outside of the septic reserve area.
- Home site is located above the septic reserve area to avoid “pumping” of waste.
- Home site is set-back from property line.
- Site location avoids oak trees and prominent rock outcroppings.
- Home site avoids slopes of 15% or greater.

As highlighted above, the site location for the following illustrations are in areas with slopes of less than 15%. With the proper design, the houses for these lots could blend to the landform more efficiently than is depicted in the following illustrations. There are also many other desirable build sites other than those depicted. The hypothetical sites selected are close to the horizon line, therefor offer the greater amount of visibility from “skylighting”.

#### **D. Descriptions of the Illustrations**

The next two illustrations are aerial views on a topographical map showing the home site location, the footprint of the hypothetical house and the approximate size and location of the septic reserve. The first illustration show lots #24, #25, and #26. As previously explained, there are no topographical cross sections for these home sites because they do not meet the requirements to be governed by Section 5.3.02E(2) as they are not on a hillside or ridgetop. The second illustration for lots #9, #10, #11, #12 and #13 have associated topographical cross section views. Although the home site is located on a slope of less than 15%, the residence could

offer a partial skylighting above the horizon line within the viewshed. Once again, because of the undulating topography, NO home sites could be located on a prominent ridgetop. All the hypothetical home sites have slopes that rise behind or in front of the residence that partially obscure the building from “skylighting”. With the mitigation measures proposed within the “Vallecito Viewshed Report” the visual impact could be significantly reduced. Once again, it bears pointing out that the Mariposa General Plan has no regulations or ordinances that govern viewshed.

The following five illustrations show the topographical cross section view of the hypothetical home site and building for each lot #9, #10, #11, #12 and #13. These illustrations show the building relative to the horizon line demonstrating that the home sites are not placed on prominent ridgetops. Enlarged views of the building site show the horizon line with respect to a single story structure and a two story structure. All illustrations are drawn to the scale of one inch equals 150 feet and each contour line of the topographical map represents a two foot change in elevation.

#### **E. Additional Mitigation**

The Catheys Valley Community Plan has a paragraph citing the following:

*“In 2000, a water tank was installed on property in the central area of Catheys Valley. This hilltop structure of significant height becomes the dominant visual feature when one enters the center of Catheys Valley from either Hornitos Road or Highway 140. The scale, mass, and siting of this water tank is inappropriate. Design and zoning regulations will ensure that future structures have a scale, mass, and siting that is appropriate to the character of Catheys Valley.”*

Since the installation of this water tank for the **Vallecito Project**, the water tank has been the subject of controversy within the community and has become a “lighting rod” for opposition to the project. This was obviously not the intent of the **Project’s** owner. The water tank is on the site of a designated Township Planning Area as defined by the 1984 Mariposa General Plan. The tank was constructed with the authorization of a building permit, with the complete knowledge of the Planning and Building Departments and in full compliance with the General Plan. The tank was intended to serve the needs of the **Vallecito Project** and the needs of the community through emergency fire suppression. The water tank could and should serve these communal needs.

As an additional measure of mitigation, the **Vallecito Project** offers to provide and maintain landscaping in the form of trees and shrubs that will obscure the sight of the water tank from the viewshed.

The **Vallecito Project** will also avoid the disturbance of prominent rock outcroppings by the locating of any building sites away from these features.

These mitigation measures will be in addition to the measures cited in the **Vallecito Project Viewshed Report** previously submitted.

#### **F. Summary**

According to the Mariposa County General plan, Technical Background Report, Section 5.501 “Age and Condition of Housing Stock – Housing Accommodations”:

*“The age and condition of the housing stock provide additional measures of housing adequacy and availability in many communities. Although age does not always correlate with substandard housing conditions, communities with a preponderance of homes more than 40 years old are more likely than newer neighborhoods to have a concentration of housing problems related to deferred maintenance, inadequate landscape care, outdated utilities or interior amenities, and a need for rehabilitation.*

*The year a structure was built can be an indicator of the current condition of the housing unit.*

*Table 5-21 shows that the highest percentage of housing units was built during the 1970’s and 1980’s. Nearly two-thirds of the County’s housing stock is thirty years old or less. However, over one-fourth of the housing stock consists of mobile homes, which are not as durable on average as site built homes. The combination of older homes and mobile homes in the County means that as many as one-third of the housing stock may exhibit problems with housing condition.”*

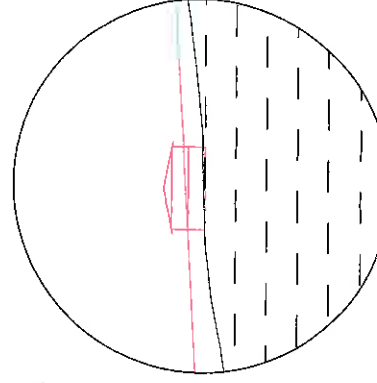
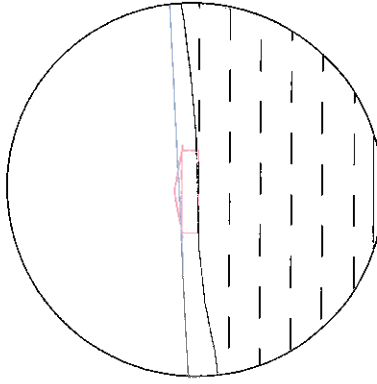
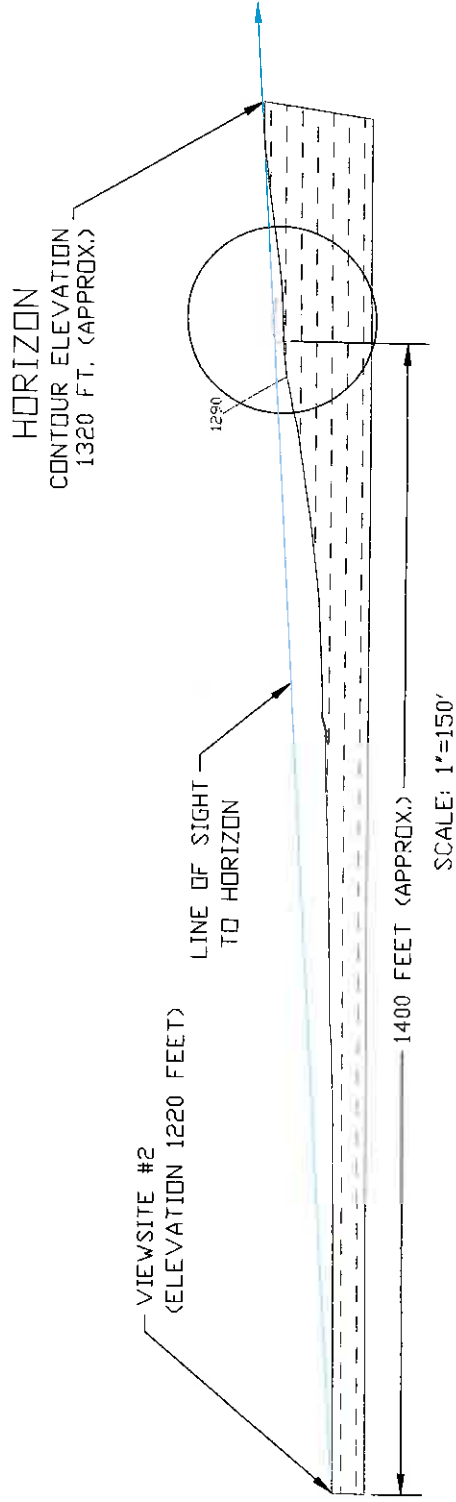
This analysis was done for the 2006 General Plan. With the submittal of this Addendum in 2014, the percentage of homes 40 years or older has increased and specifically, Catheys Valley has a high concentration of mobile homes and older homes. The Vallecito Project will provide needed new and updated housing, provide jobs through new construction, provide new commercial opportunities that make available goods and services to the community and offer a new and viable tax basis for the County.





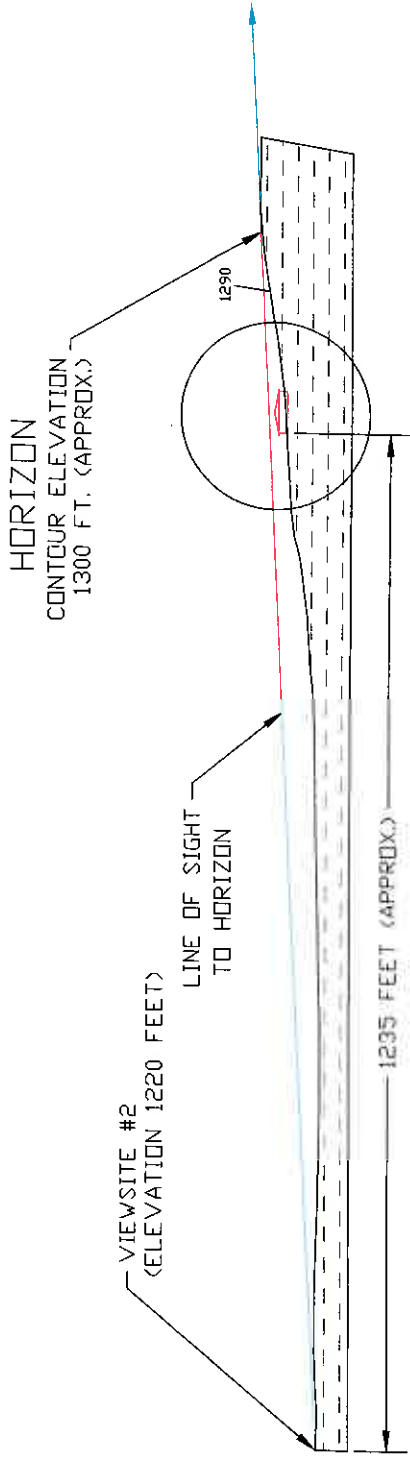


VIEWSHED HORIZON ANALYSIS  
TOPOGRAPHICAL CROSS SECTION  
LOT #9

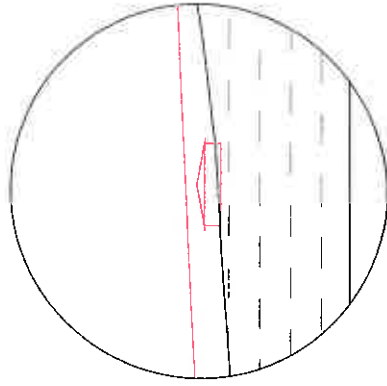




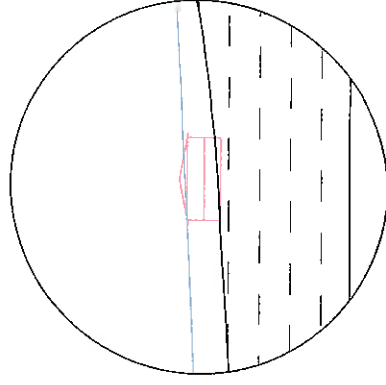
VIEWSHED HORIZON ANALYSIS  
TOPOGRAPHICAL CROSS SECTION  
LOT #10



SCALE: 1"=150'

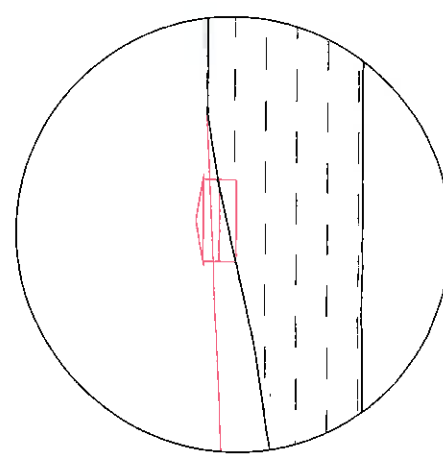
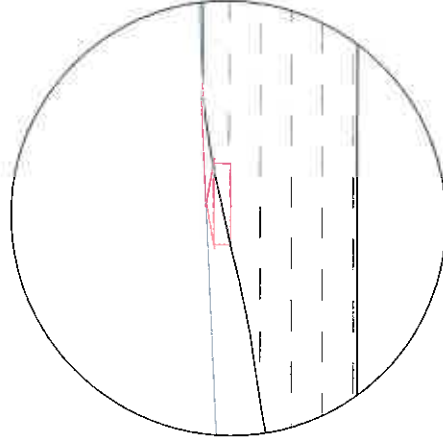
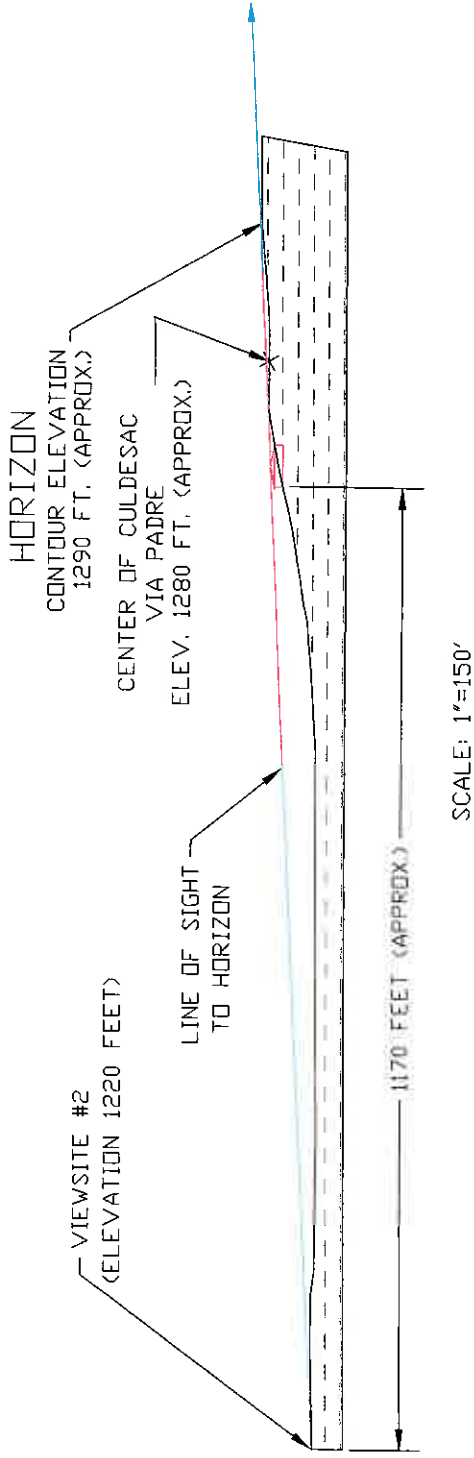


ENLARGED VIEW (2X)  
SINGLE STORY RESIDENCE

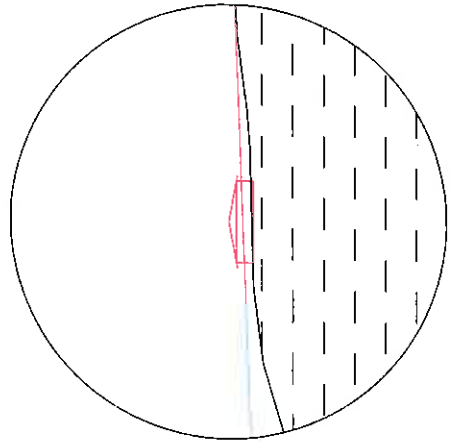
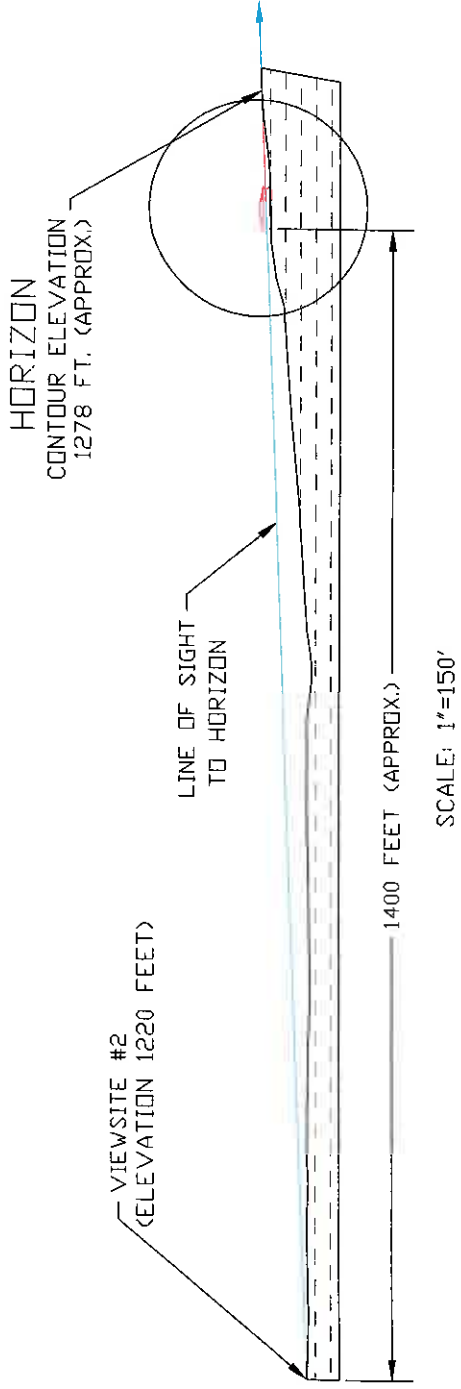


ENLARGED VIEW (2X)  
TWO STORY RESIDENCE

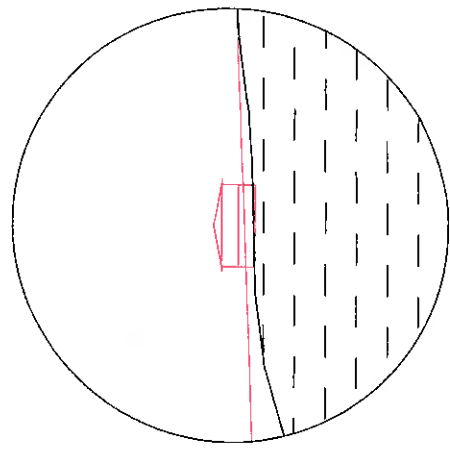
VIEWSHED HORIZON ANALYSIS  
 TOPOGRAPHICAL CROSS SECTION  
 LOT #11



VIEWSHED HORIZON ANALYSIS  
TOPOGRAPHICAL CROSS SECTION  
LOT #12

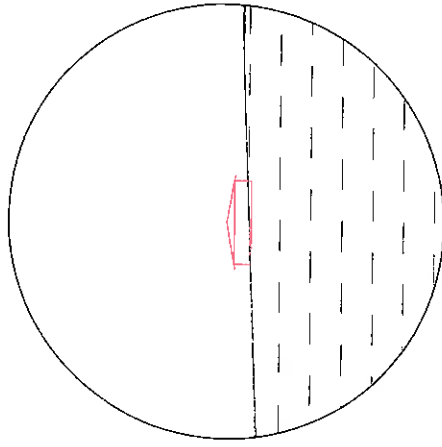
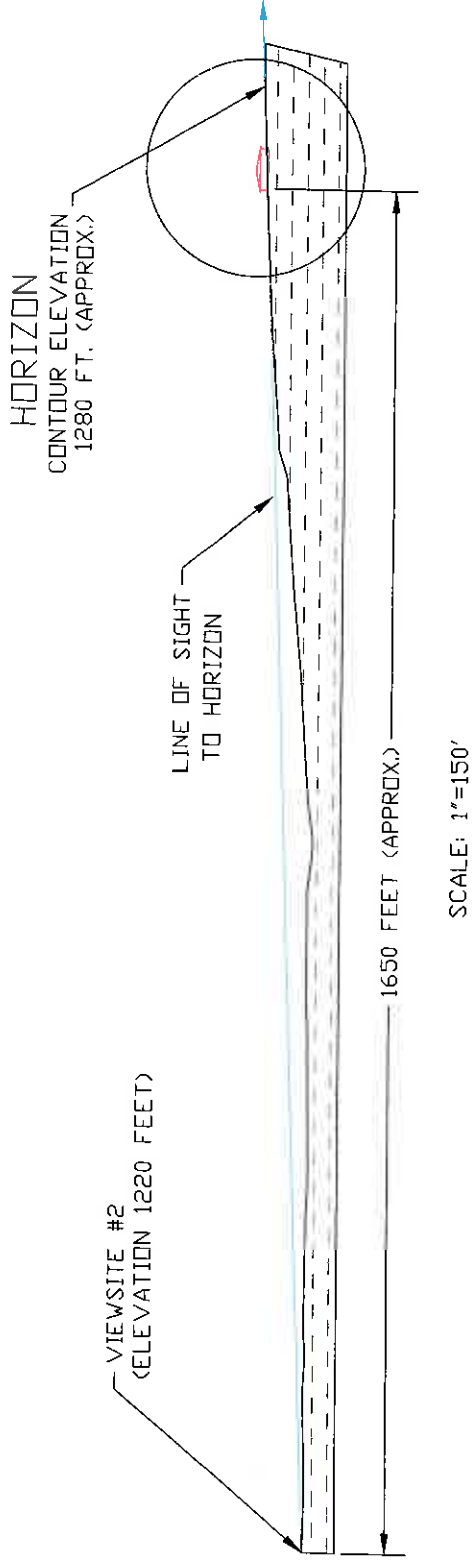


ENLARGED VIEW (2X)  
SINGLE STORY RESIDENCE

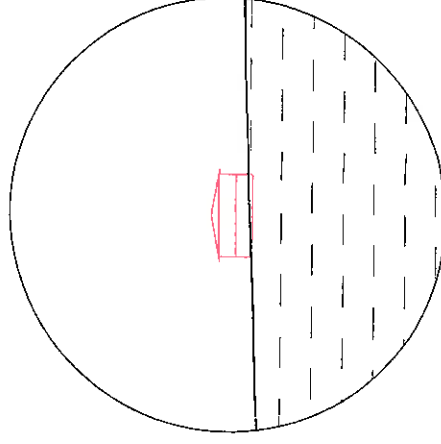


ENLARGED VIEW (2X)  
TWO STORY RESIDENCE

VIEWSHED HORIZON ANALYSIS  
TOPOGRAPHICAL CROSS SECTION  
LOT #13



ENLARGED VIEW (2X)  
SINGLE STORY RESIDENCE



ENLARGED VIEW (2X)  
TWO STORY RESIDENCE