

PUC Smart Hearing on Suez Water Rate Increase

Testimony of
Kyle L. Miller
Mechanicsburg Borough Councilman
July 11, 2018 6:00PM

Good evening, your honor, Commissioners, and guests. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight on the Suez Water rate increase request, filed with the PUC on 30 April, 2018.

My name is Kyle Miller, I am a resident of Mechanicsburg Borough and member of Mechanicsburg Borough Council. I appear in front of you tonight in both an official and personal capacity. Mechanicsburg Borough Council has tasked me with delivering a message in opposition to the requested Suez Water rate increase.

We believe that Borough residents, as consumers of Suez Water, are shouldering an excessive cost on top of current fees for operations by Suez.

Suez Water is completing a three phase upgrade of water mains throughout a section of the Borough of Mechanicsburg. Phase 1 of this upgrade began over year ago in May of 2017, you may see a map of the area in Exhibit A. Phase 1 remains incomplete to this date. Meanwhile, Suez began Phase 2 of the project in mid-May of 2018. Phase 3 is expected to begin in the Fall of 2018 with elements of both prior phases remaining incomplete.

In its wake, Suez Water has turned Borough streets as well as residents' sidewalks and yards into a year long stone, gravel, asphalt patchwork. The project is plagued with inconsistent timelines, neglect, poor communication to residents and substandard work. Suez has left many safety hazards to residents including gravel sidewalk patches and collapsed trenches, examples of collapsed trenches and a failed temporary patch is included in Exhibit B.

The effects of this shoddy, scattered project with an increased heavy equipment traffic on residential streets is taking a toll. Sections of Borough streets have turned to stone and are eroding away. In one section, Suez performed a street cut on the wrong side of the road and has yet to repair it, leaving the Borough road susceptible to water damage. Please see Exhibit C picturing the affected streets in Phase 1. If Suez Water continues the project in this manner, Borough residents will be stuck holding the bill to repair roads that sustained long term damage and substandard repairs by Suez.

The personal properties of our residents have also been impacted by the Suez project. In the last week I have counted over 20 properties in Phase 1 with sidewalks and driveways replaced with temporary stone gravel. Some of these have remained unrepaired since the Spring of 2017. This count is likely to grow, compounding the problem, as Suez fails to complete their

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previous phase while moving on to another phase. Over 20 photos of those affected properties have been provided in Exhibit D.

Personally, I know the detriments of having sidewalks unfinished with gravel. During my morning run down E. Coover Street in early June, I tripped and fell on a gravel sidewalk patch created by Suez in the so far incomplete Phase 1. As a result, the recurring pain in my hand is a constant reminder of the safety hazard of Suez's unfinished work. A photo of this area is included in Exhibit D.

If anyone would like to refer to the pictures and exhibits mentioned in this report, they can be accessed on my website, kylelmiller.org.

In a related project for water main upgrades on S. Market St. and Main St., Suez Water removed the decorative modified polyurethane resin crosswalks installed by the Borough through the Safe Routes to Schools Grant. Over the objections of Borough staff, these crosswalks were replaced with a lesser quality patterned thermoplastic material. This material is recommended for lower volume roads, see PennDOT Publication 447 "Approved Products for Lower Volume Local Roads". On Main St. and Market St., both high volume State roads, the Suez installed product will wear out quicker causing additional cost of replacement in the future. See Exhibit E for photos.

The Suez Water upgrade project has cost the Borough additional money in staff time and attention diverted from other priorities. Due to the project, the Borough has received complaints on a weekly basis and as many as 3 per day. Additionally, due to the negative impact of this project on Borough infrastructure and our residents, we are assuming the cost to engage our engineer and professional staff to revise our street-cut permit ordinance.

In Mechanicsburg, the balance of consumer interest has been upended. Suez Water has failed to complete upgrades in a timely manner and caused property damage both public and private. Approving an increase of Suez rates at this time would only add insult to injury for Borough residents. Instead, Suez shareholders should participate in the cost to restore Borough streets and residents' properties.

We appreciate the necessity for upgrades to our infrastructure and the costs thereof to both companies and consumers. However, Suez Water has placed an undue hardship on Borough residents. In order to protect the public interest, we ask that the PUC deny the proposed rate increase until Suez Water develops a suitable remediation plan and repairs damage to Borough streets and personal property.

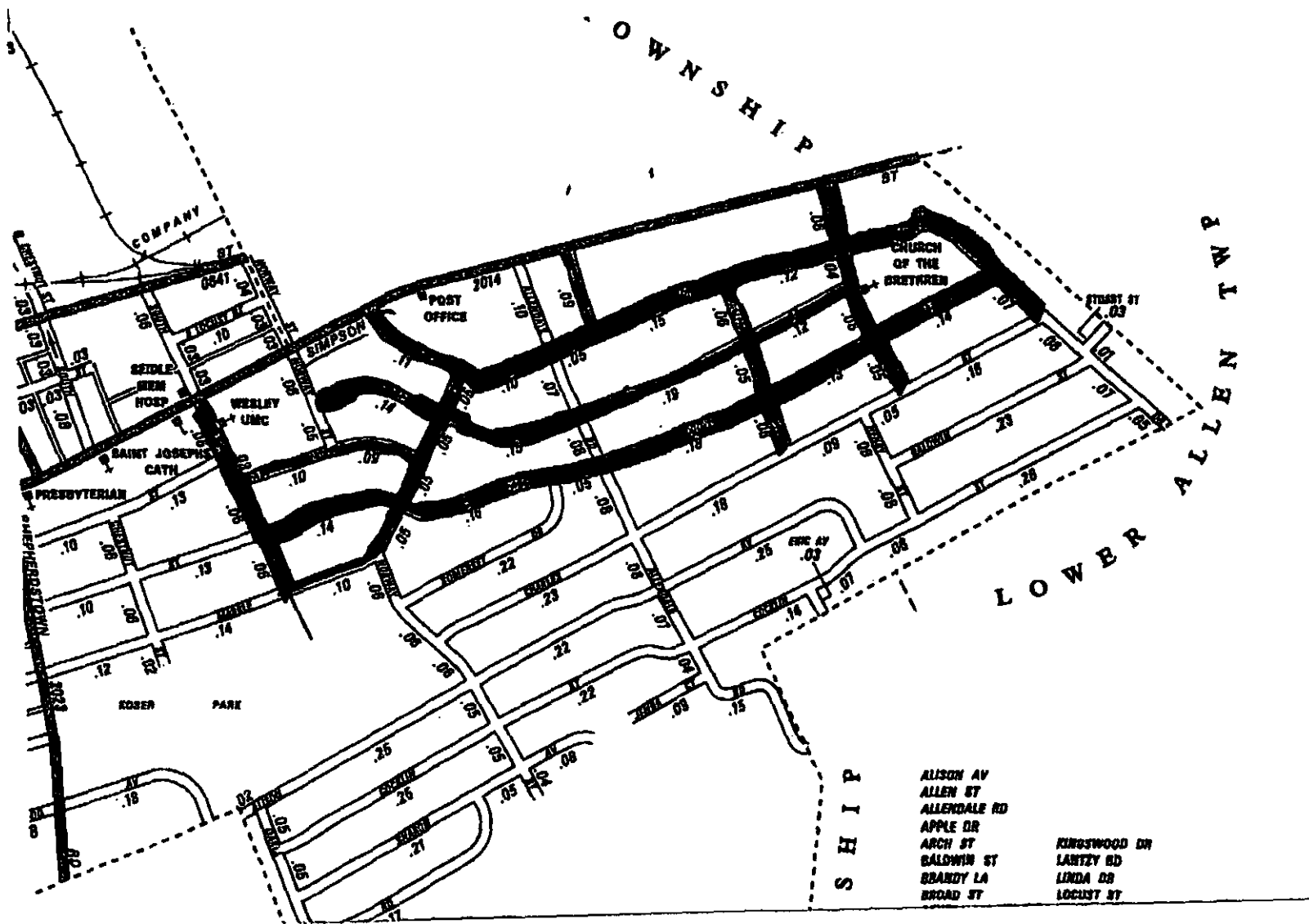
Exhibit A

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**Suez Water Phase 1
PUC Smart Hearing Testimony of Kyle Miller, Mechanicsburg Borough
July 11, 2018**



Suez water Phase 1

Exhibit B

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Suez Water Phase 1
PUC Smart Hearing Testimony of Kyle Miller, Mechanicsburg Borough
July 11, 2018





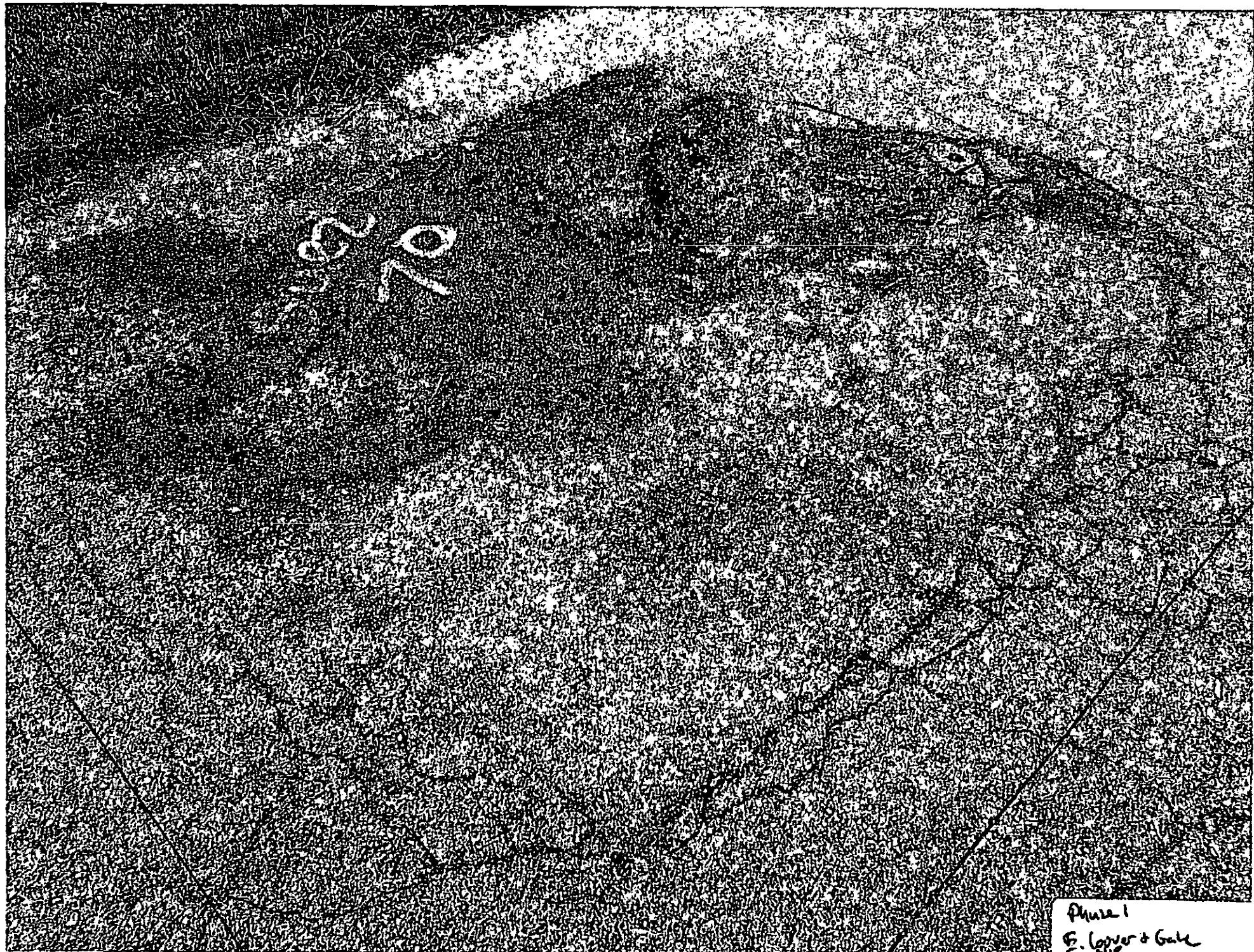




Phase 1
Somerset + E. Coover
6/18



Phase 1
E Cover + Gate
6/18



Phase 1
E. Cooper & Gale
6/18

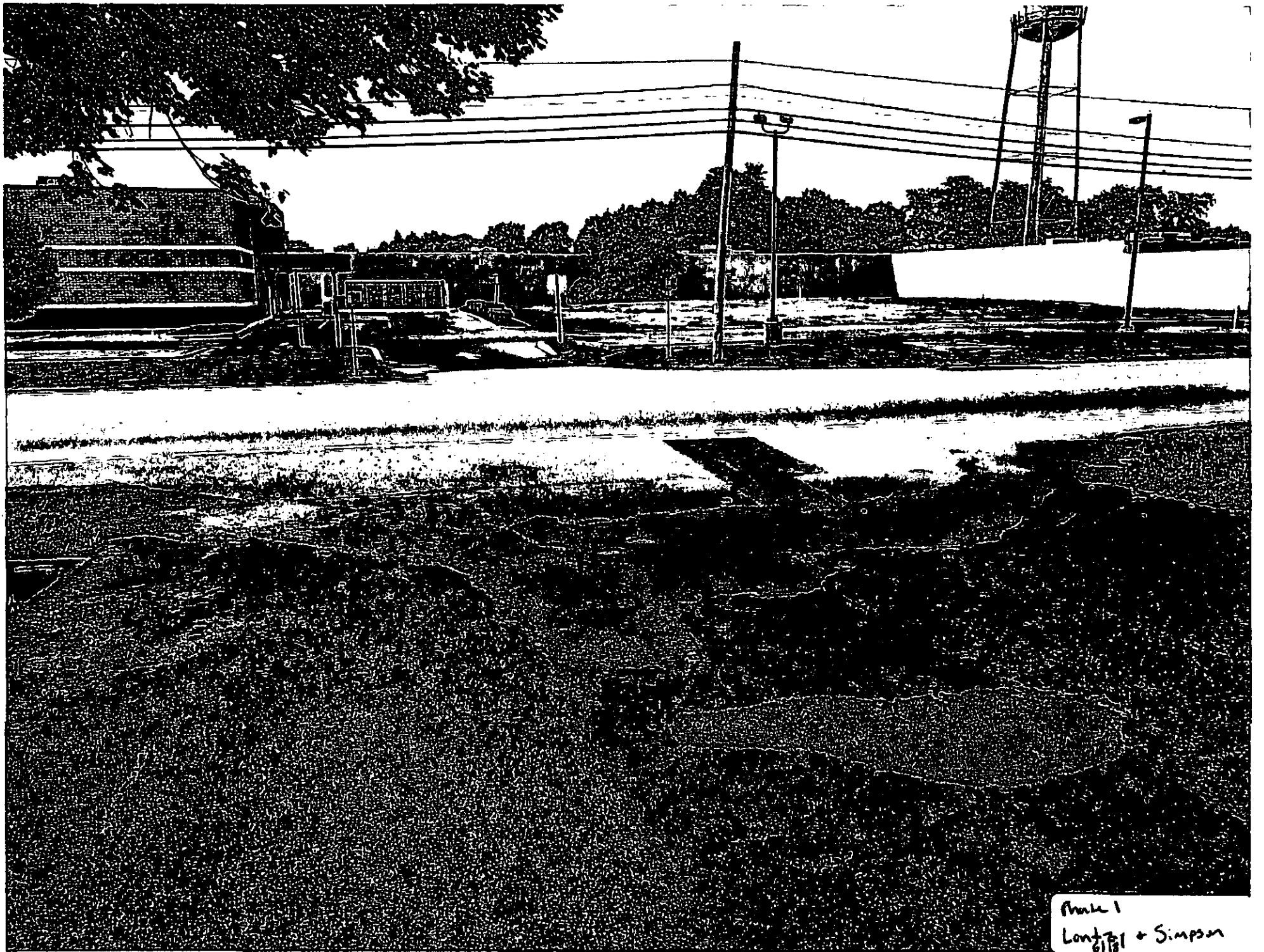


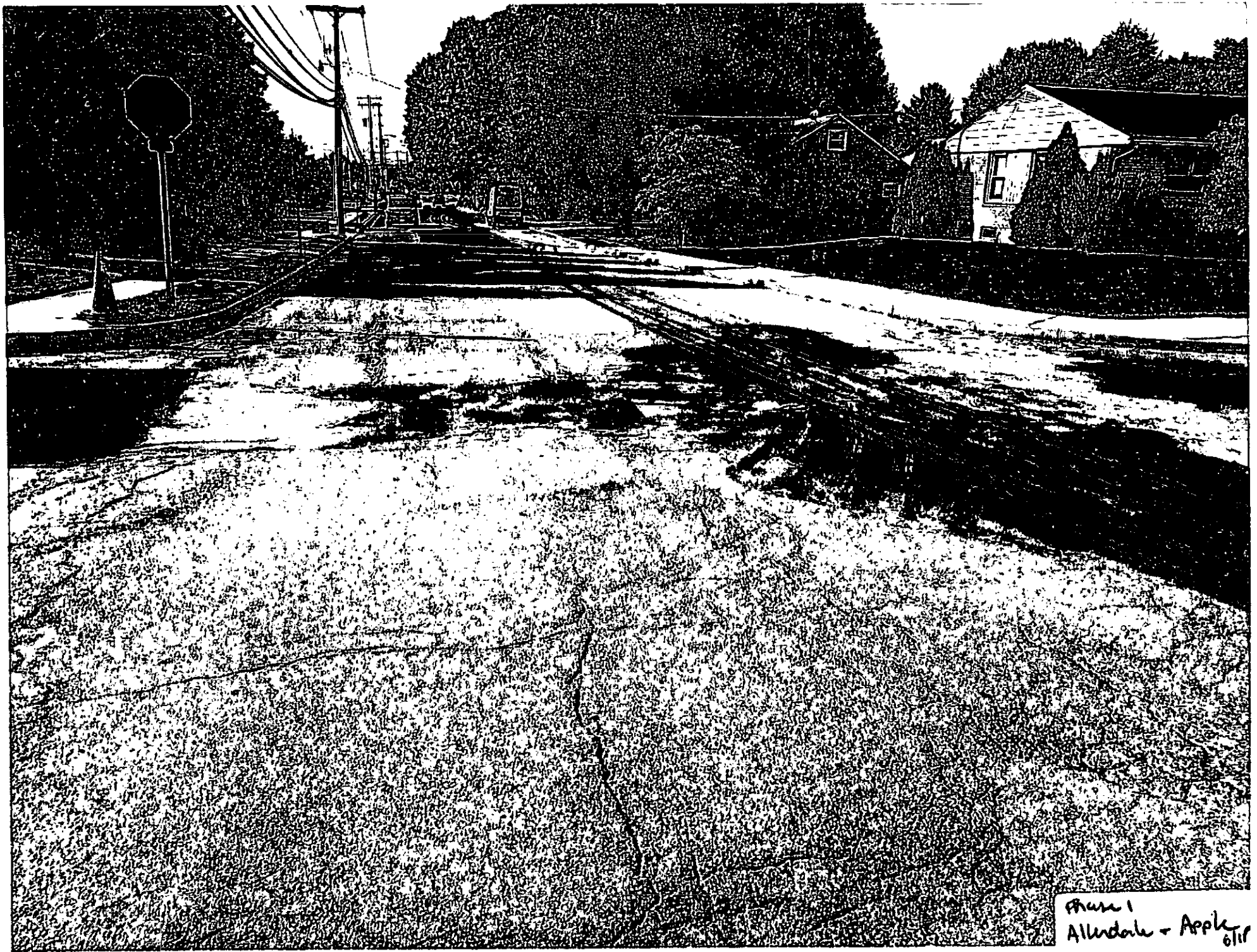
Photo 1
Long 6/17/81 + Simpson



Phase 1
Lantry and Apple
6118



Phase 1
Laitzy & Apple
6/17



Phase 1
Allendale - Apple 6/17



Phase 1
Bod at Apple 6/19



Phase 1
April 23, 2005/6/1



Phase 1
Apple Dr + E Coover 61



Photo 1
E. Cowie + James
018



Phase 1
James St. 4/18



Phase I
James St.



Phase 1
Allendale + Robert
6/18



Phase 1
Robert St. 6118



Phase 1
Gule + Apple 6/18



Phase 1
Marla + Robert 6/14



Pravel
Sines St. 618



Phased
Apple Dr. 618



Phase 1
APRIL 2, 618





Exhibit D

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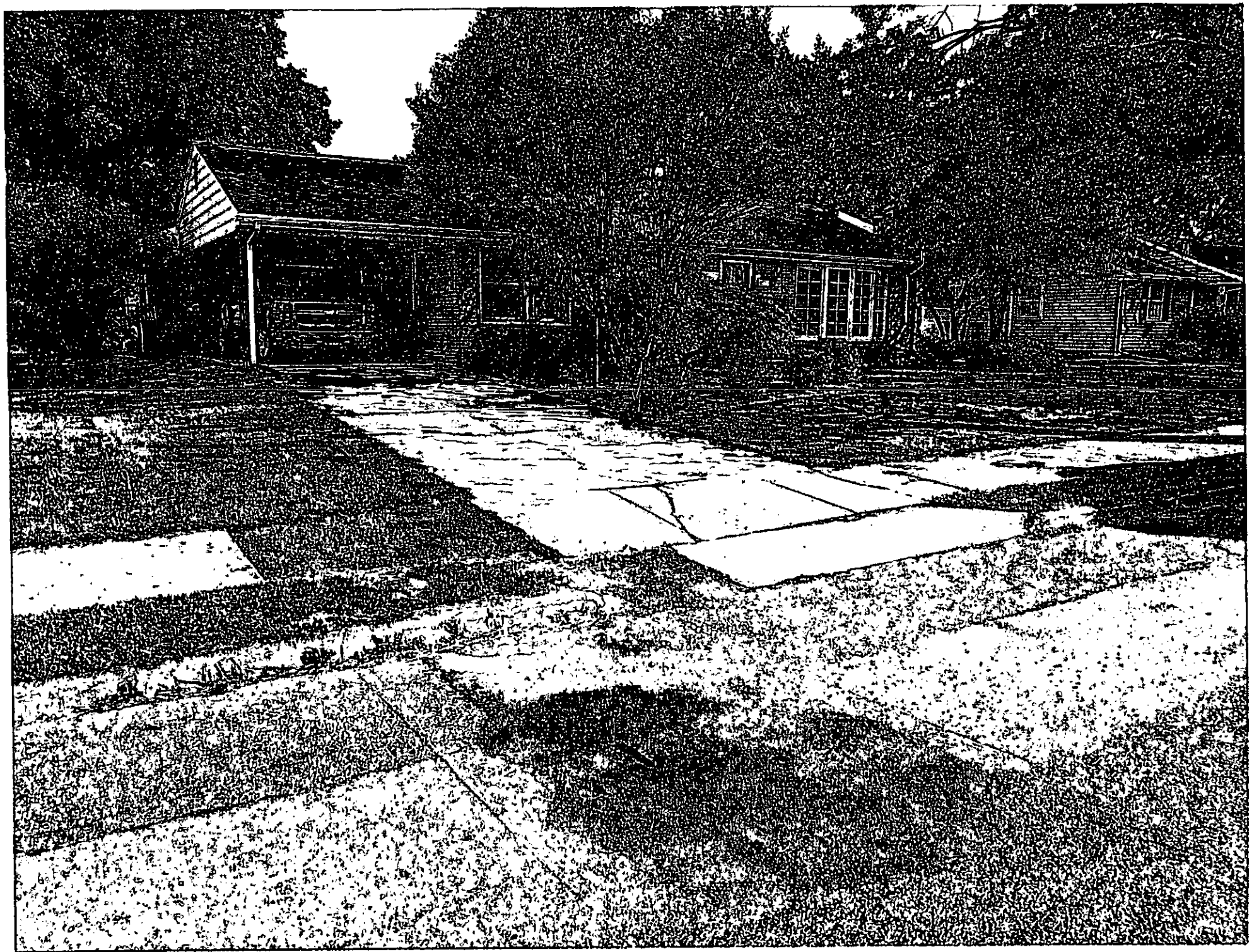
Suez Water Phase 1
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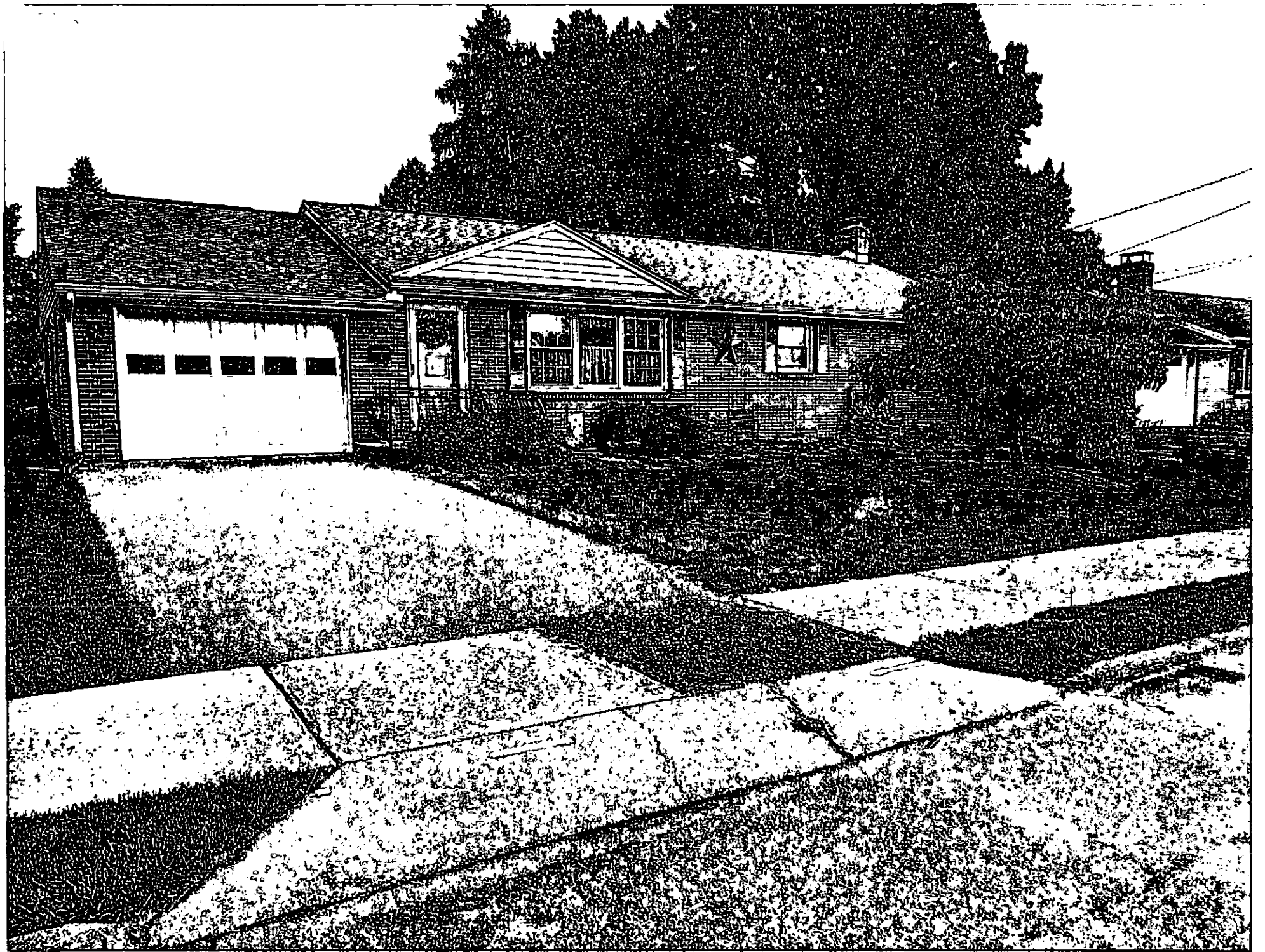




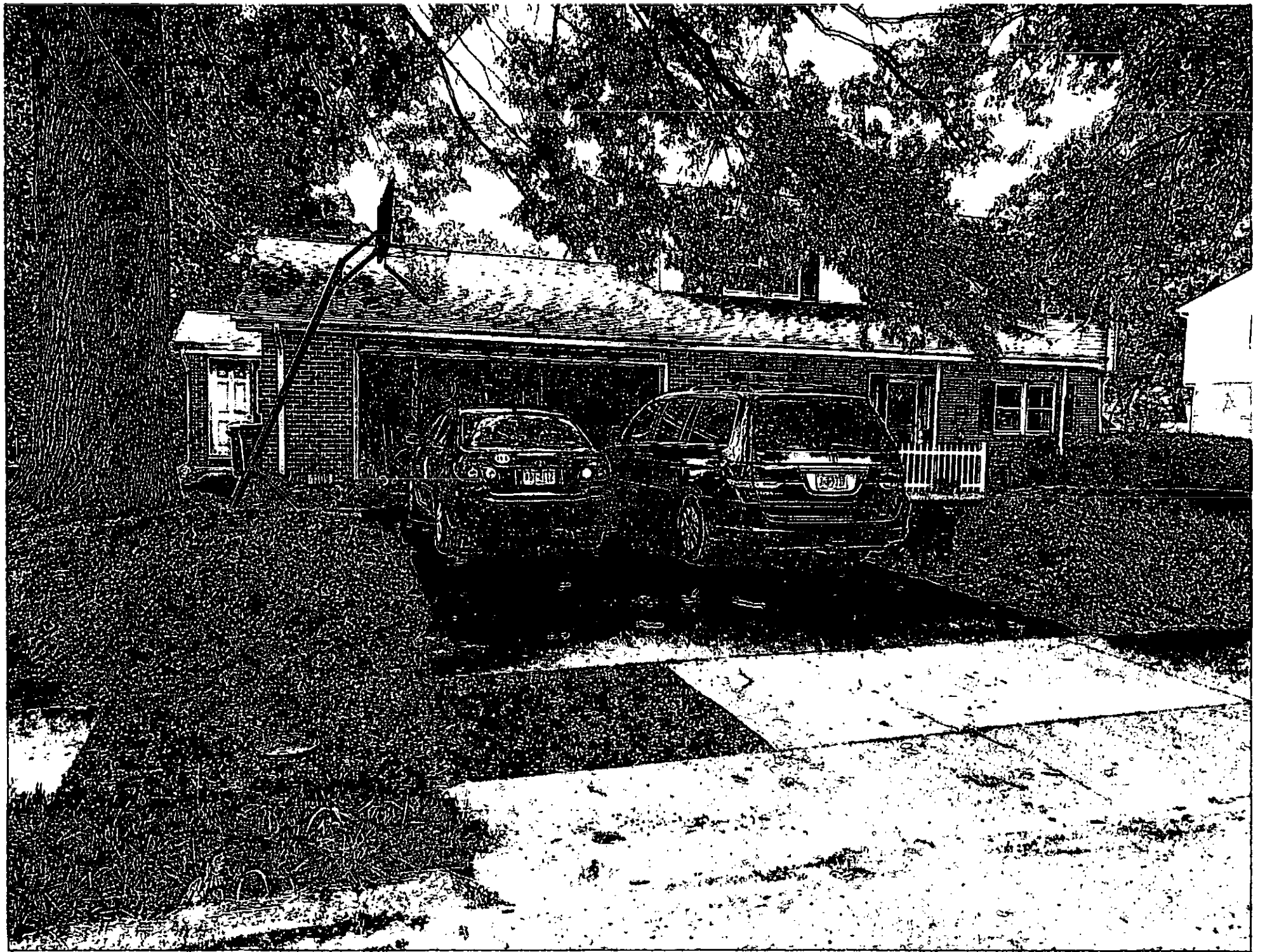










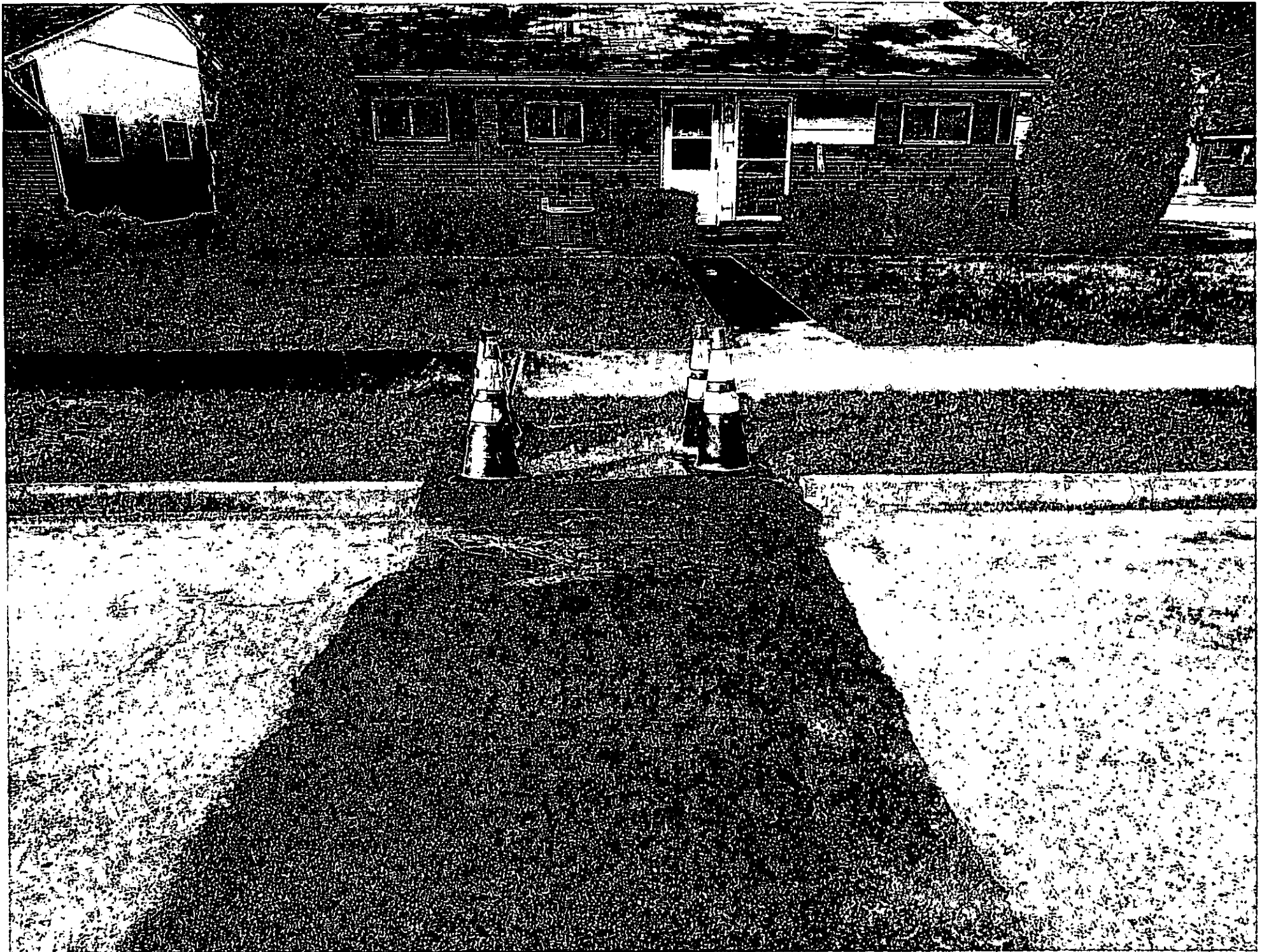




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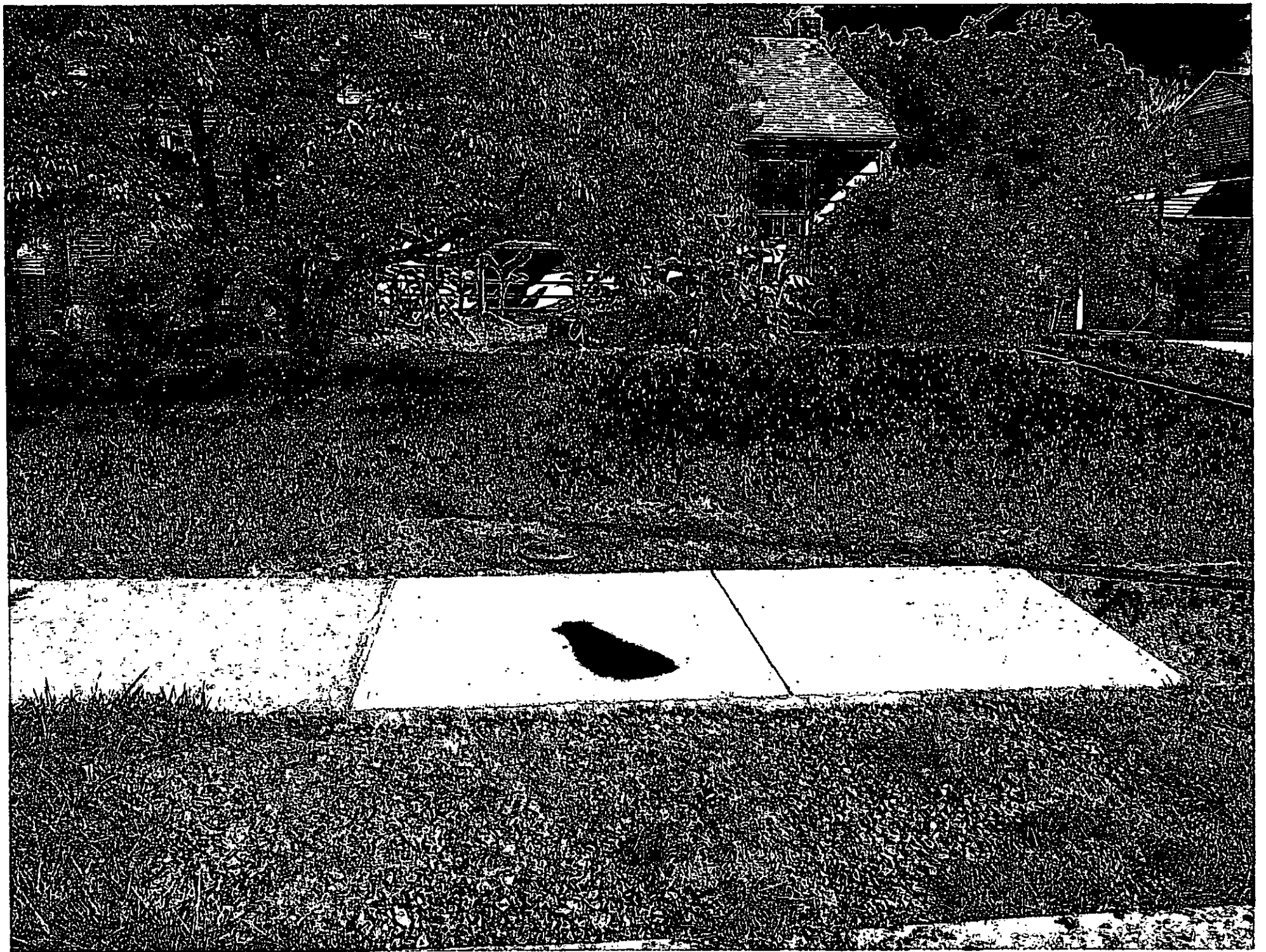
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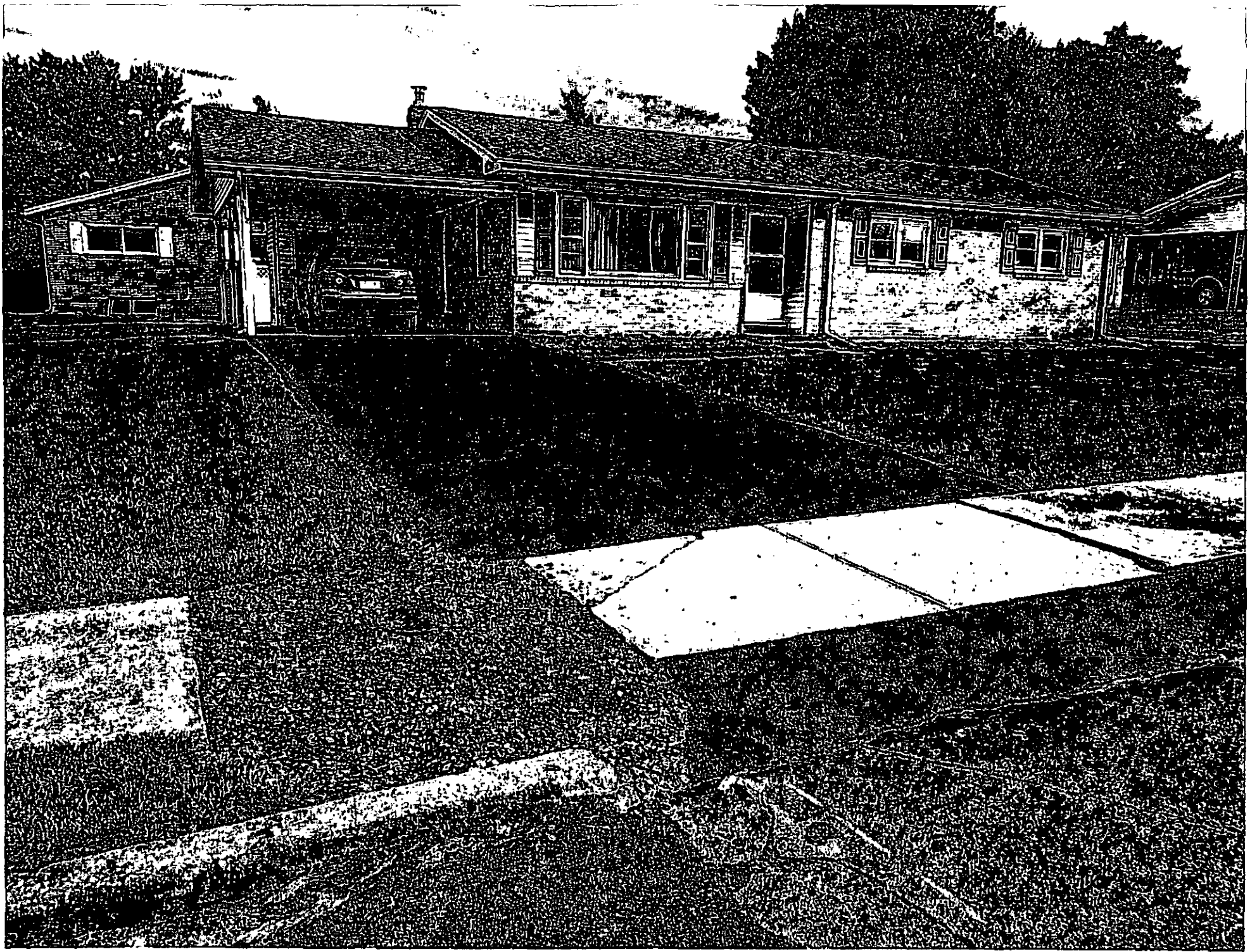


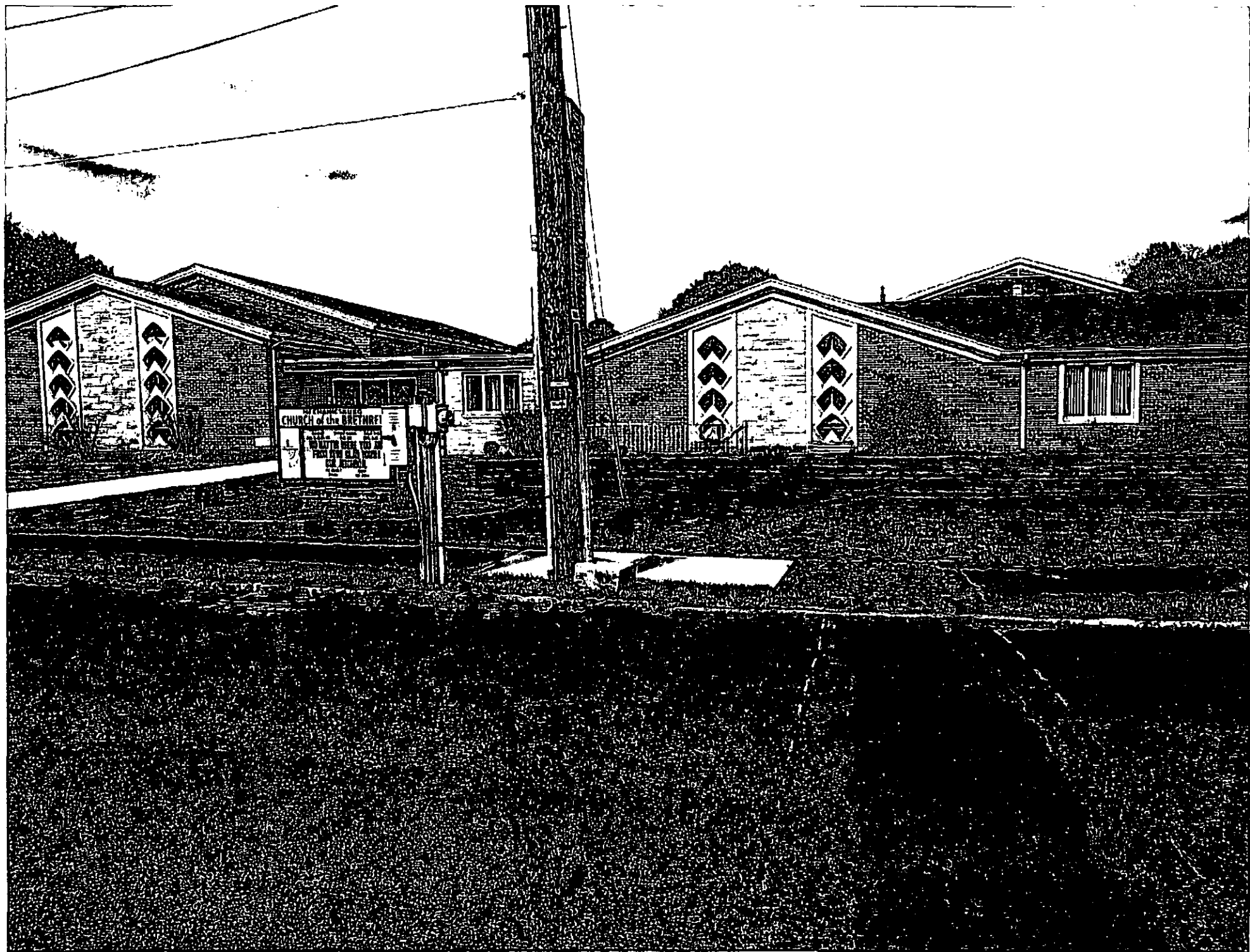
NO
PARKING
Monday - Friday
6 AM - 8 PM
City of
100-77-200

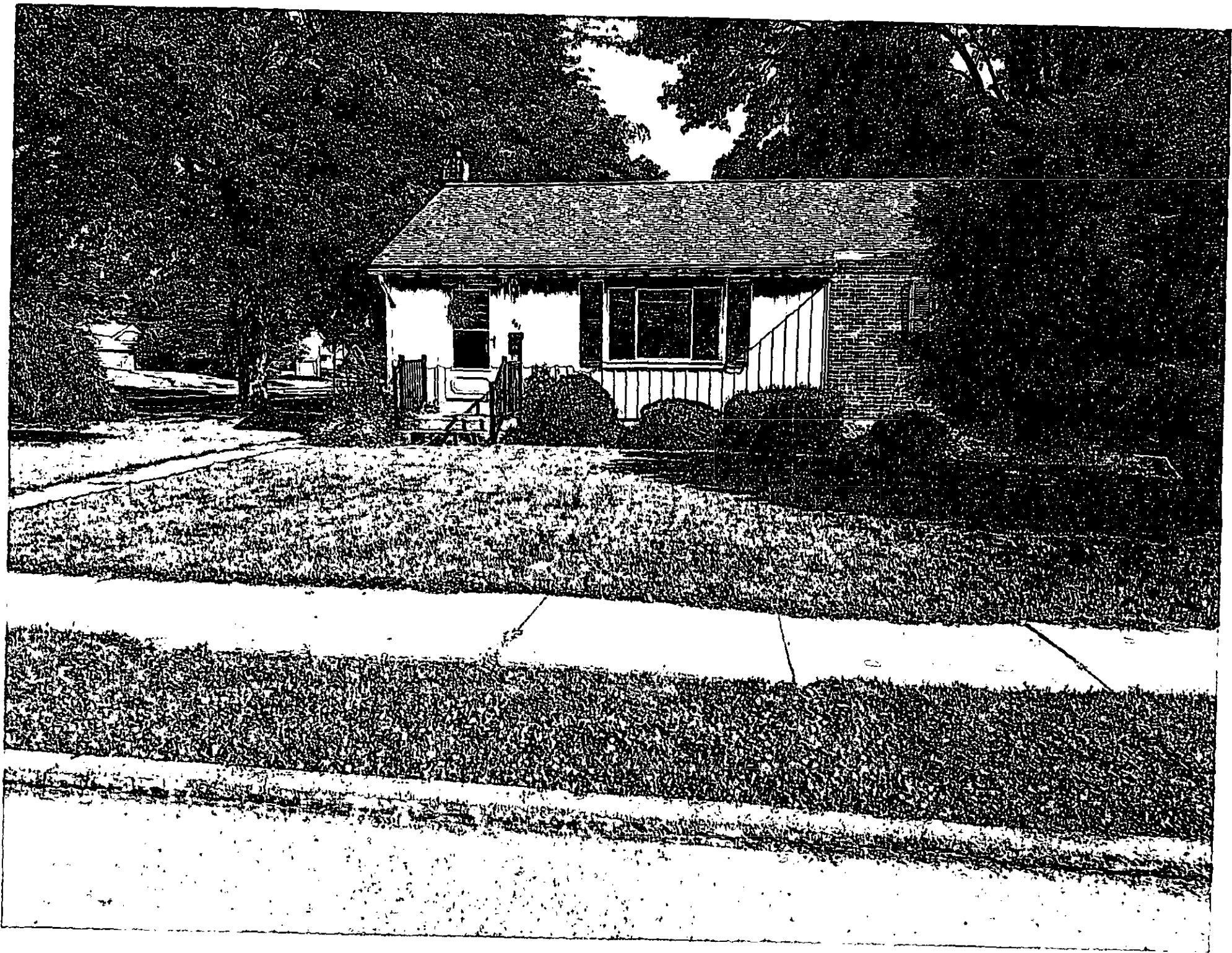




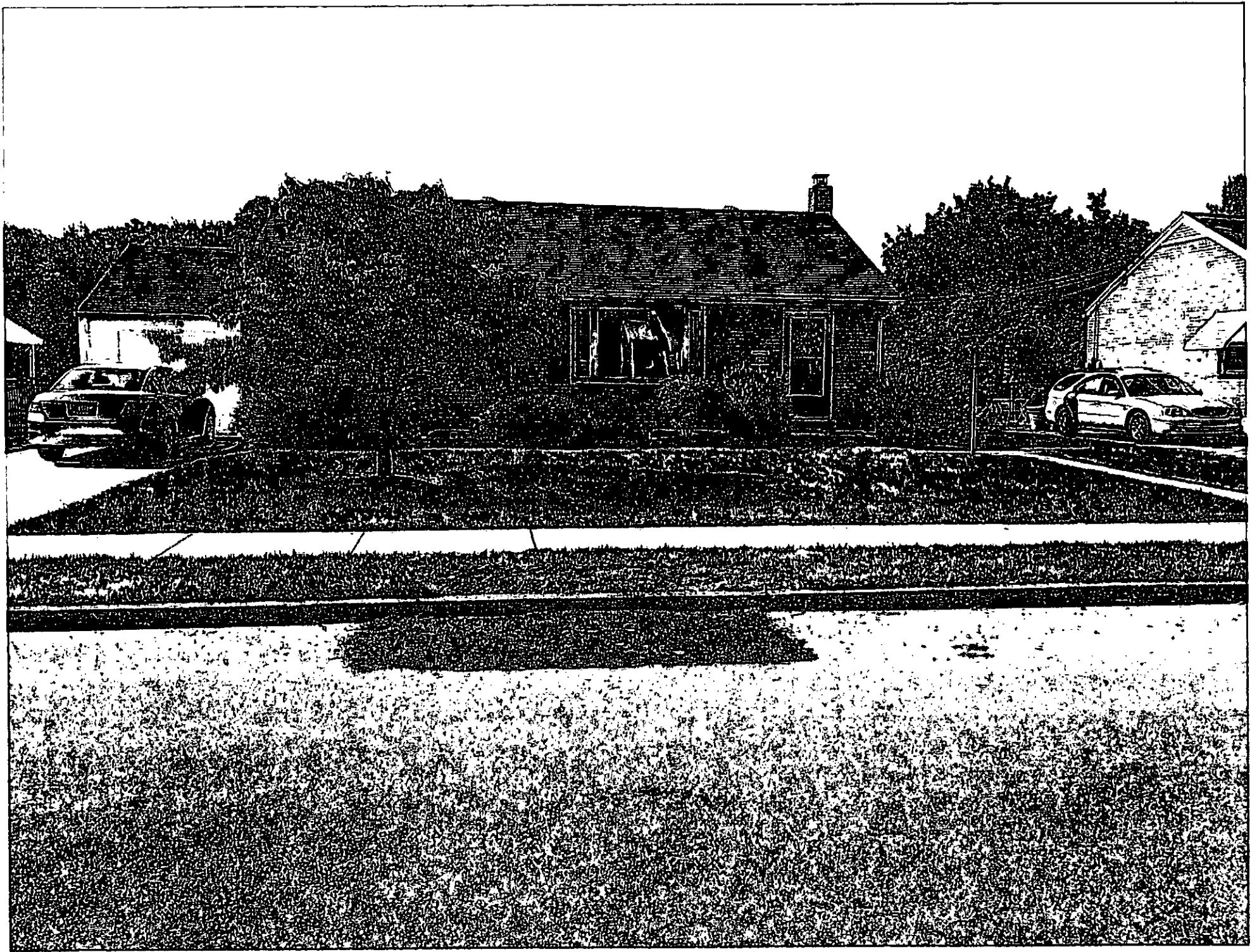






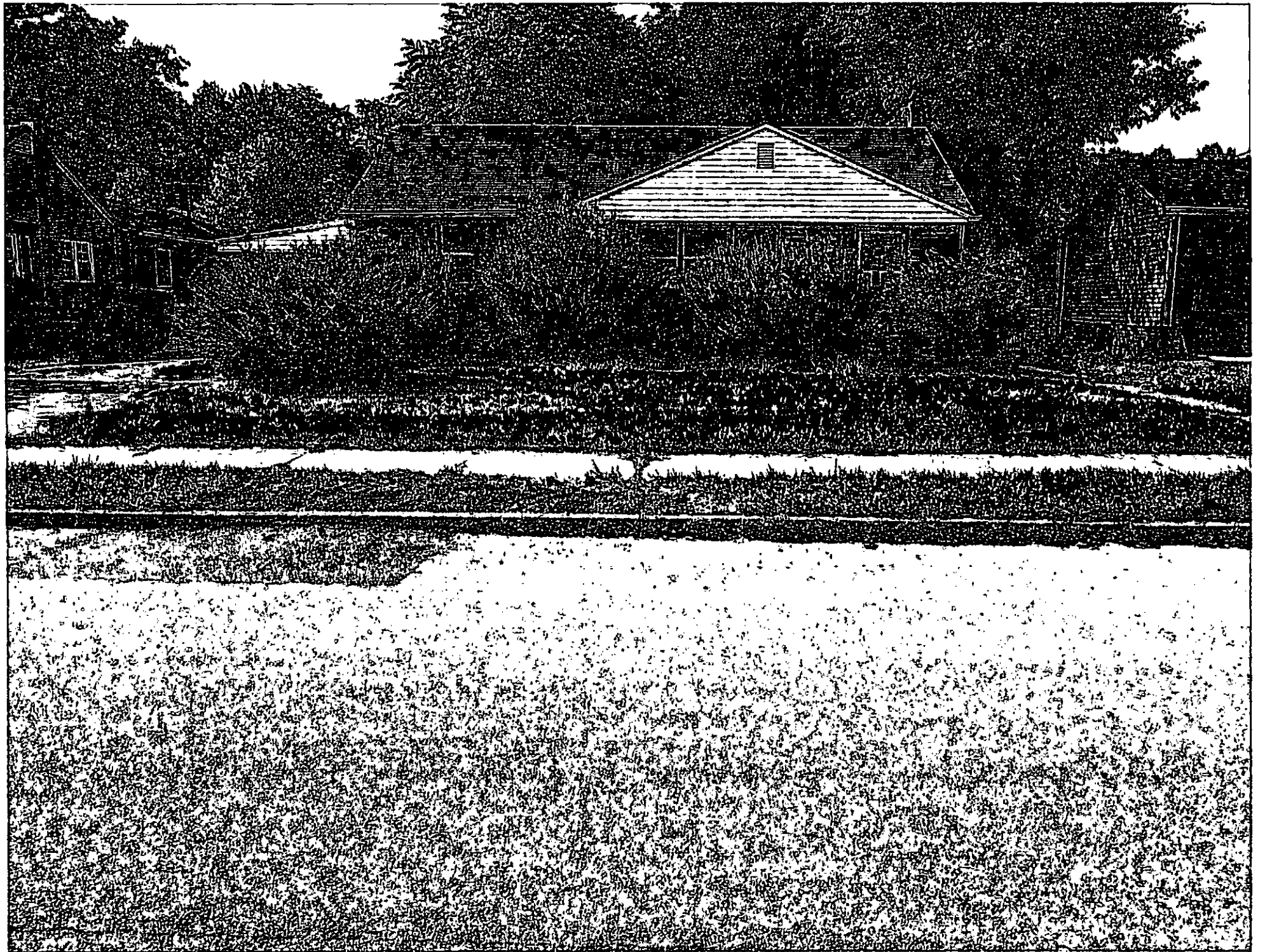


















Phase 1
Gale + Robert 6/8

Exhibit E

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