

The background image is a close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a natural landscape. It features a small, gentle waterfall cascading over dark, wet rocks. The rocks and surrounding ground are heavily covered in various types of moss, ranging from bright green to deep forest green. In the upper right background, there are branches with vibrant red leaves, possibly from a Japanese maple, adding a splash of color to the scene. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

Site Assessment & Base Maps

Your base map: a diagram of permanent & existing features

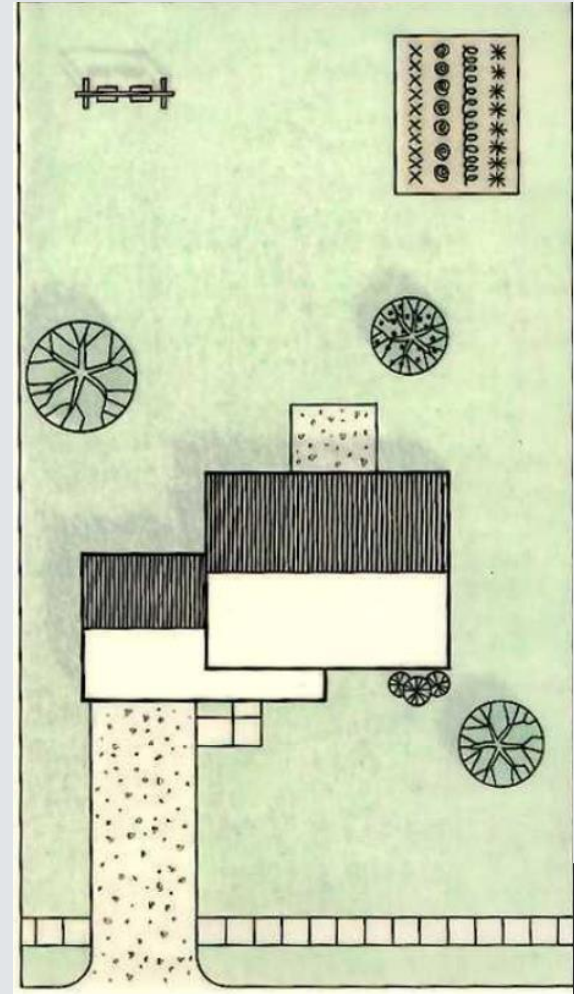
Birds eye view gives a new perspective

- **Base map includes:**

- *Fixed features*
- *Existing plants*
- *Inventory of what you have on site*

- **Use tracing paper over this base map to:**

- *create different layers for site assessment activities and garden design*



How much area should I map?

Entire property or one or more planting areas?

- **Whole property:**

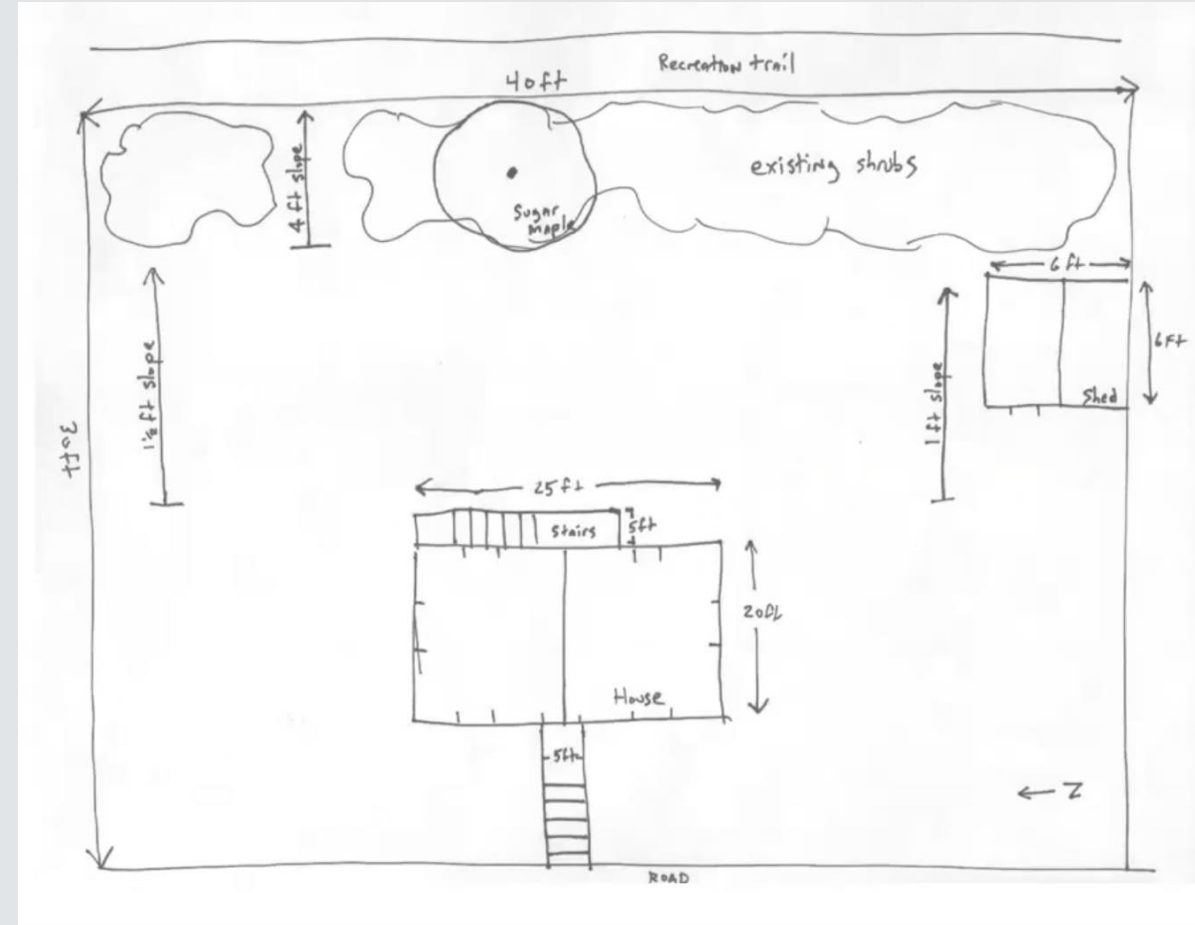
- *Think about the entire property and allocate areas or 'rooms' for different uses*
- *Helps determining broader concepts and future garden spaces (vegetable garden, play area, water feature, etc.)*
- *Discovering different microclimates on your property helps with functionality and right plant right place*

- **Specific areas:**

- *Remember when working on smaller areas of the property, use a larger scale map for details*

Existing features

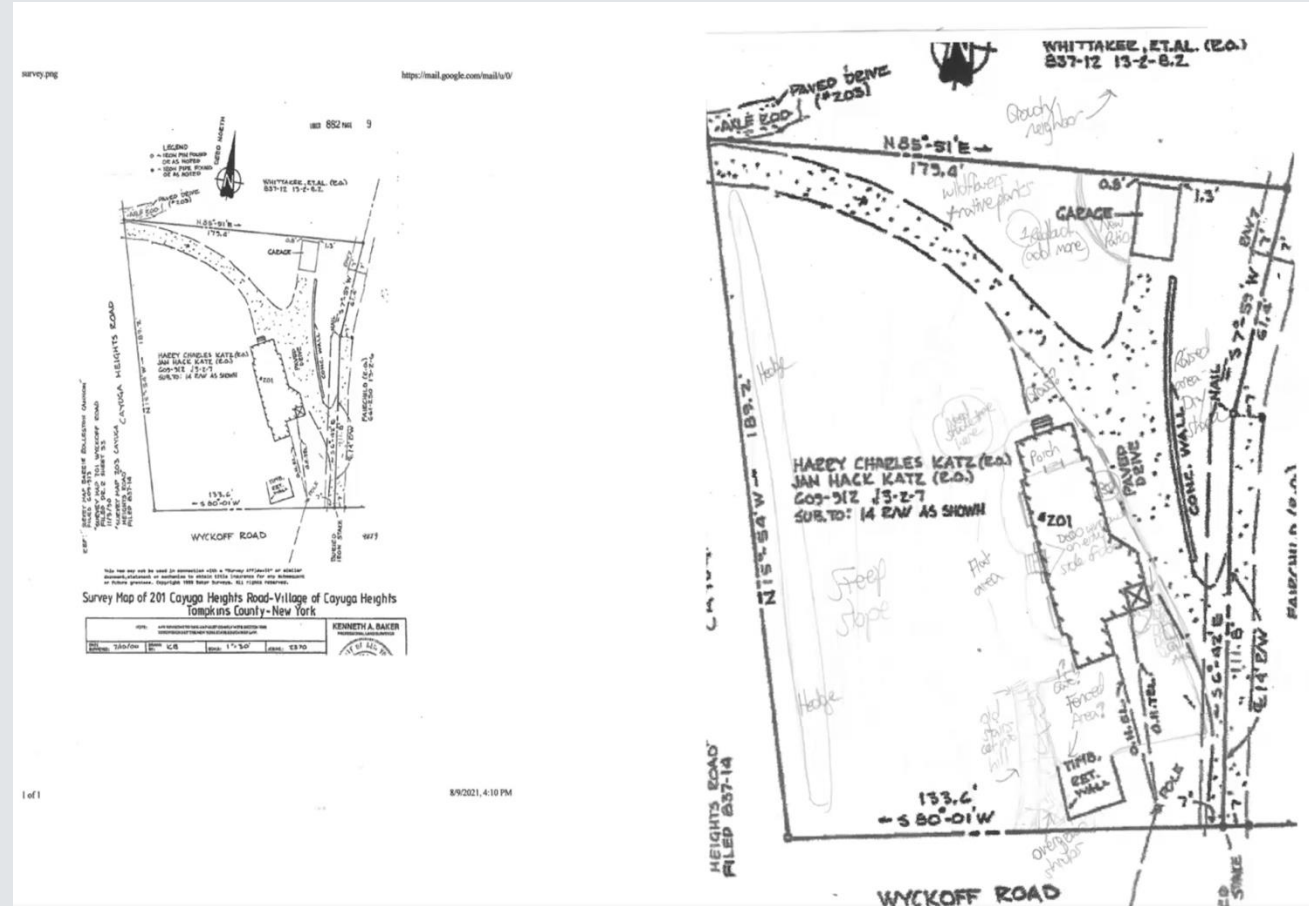
- Property lines
- House and structures
- Doors, windows
- Walkways, driveways,
- Existing plants and trees
- Overhead and underground utilities
- North arrow



Survey Maps

Use as a basis for:

- property and building shapes
- driveways
- environmental features
- Accurate measurements



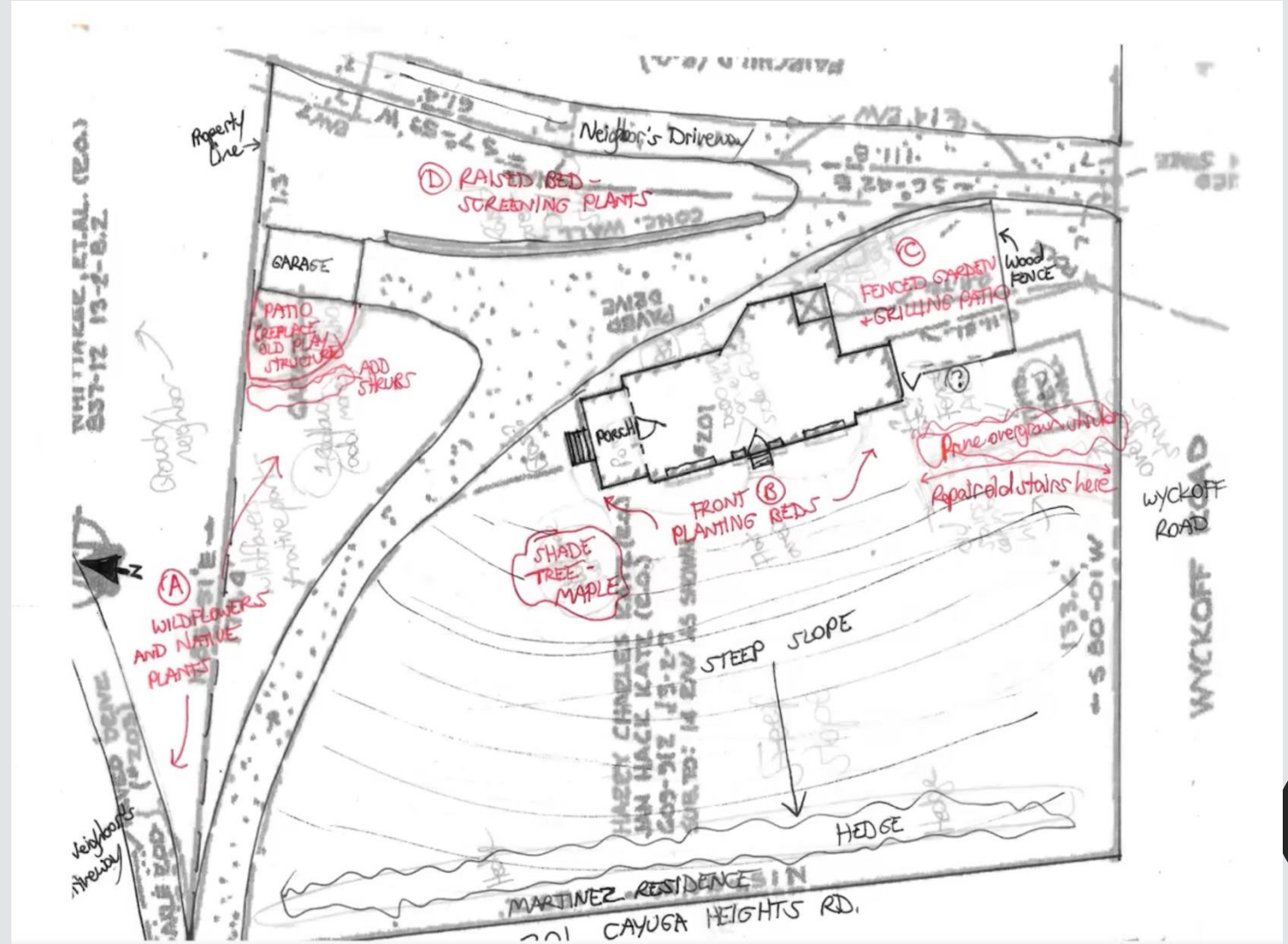
Survey & Satellite Maps: tracing paper overlay

For design ideas:

- Shade tree, wildflowers and natives, front beds, etc.

Assessments:

- steep slope, wood fence, neighbor's driveway, etc.



Google Maps or Satellite View

Future garden area here



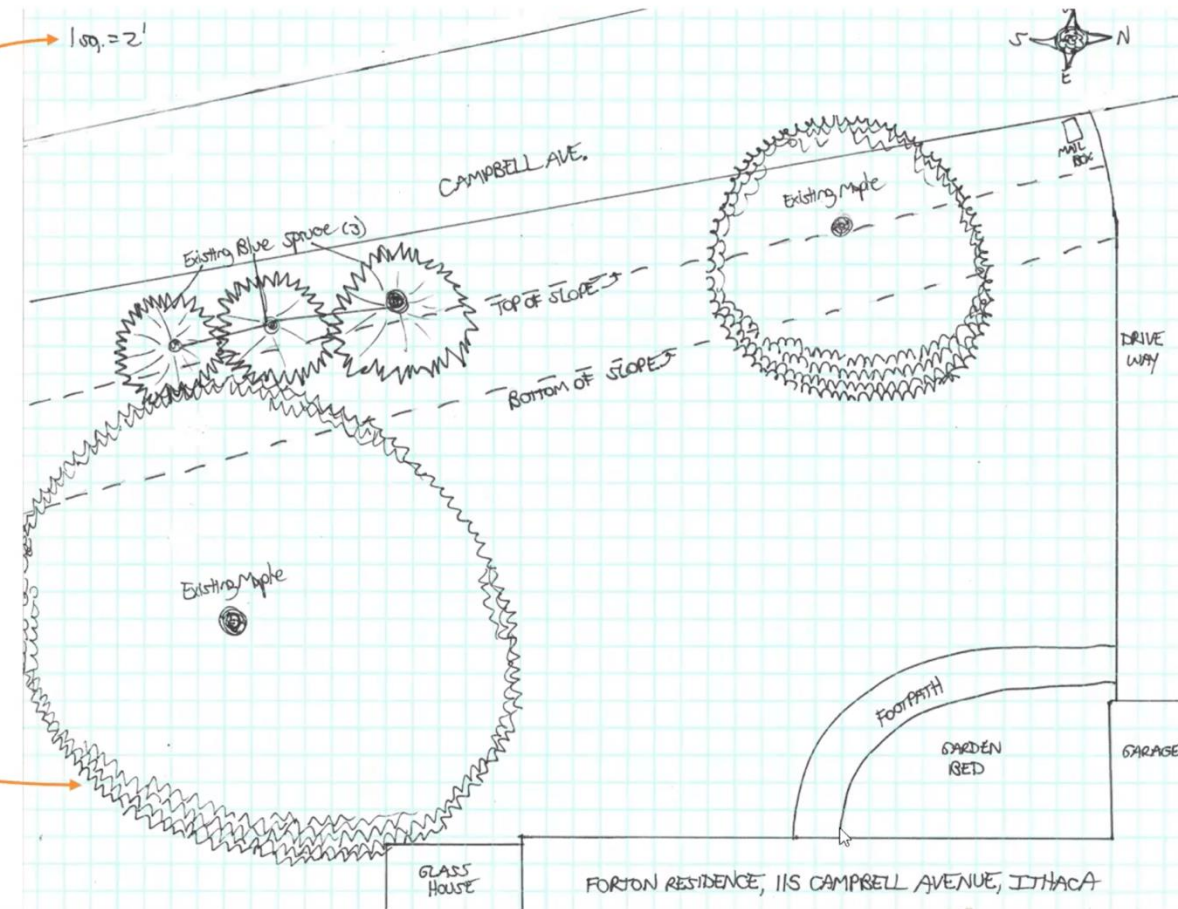
There is a scale in the lower right corner you can use for measuring

Future garden area: drawn to scale

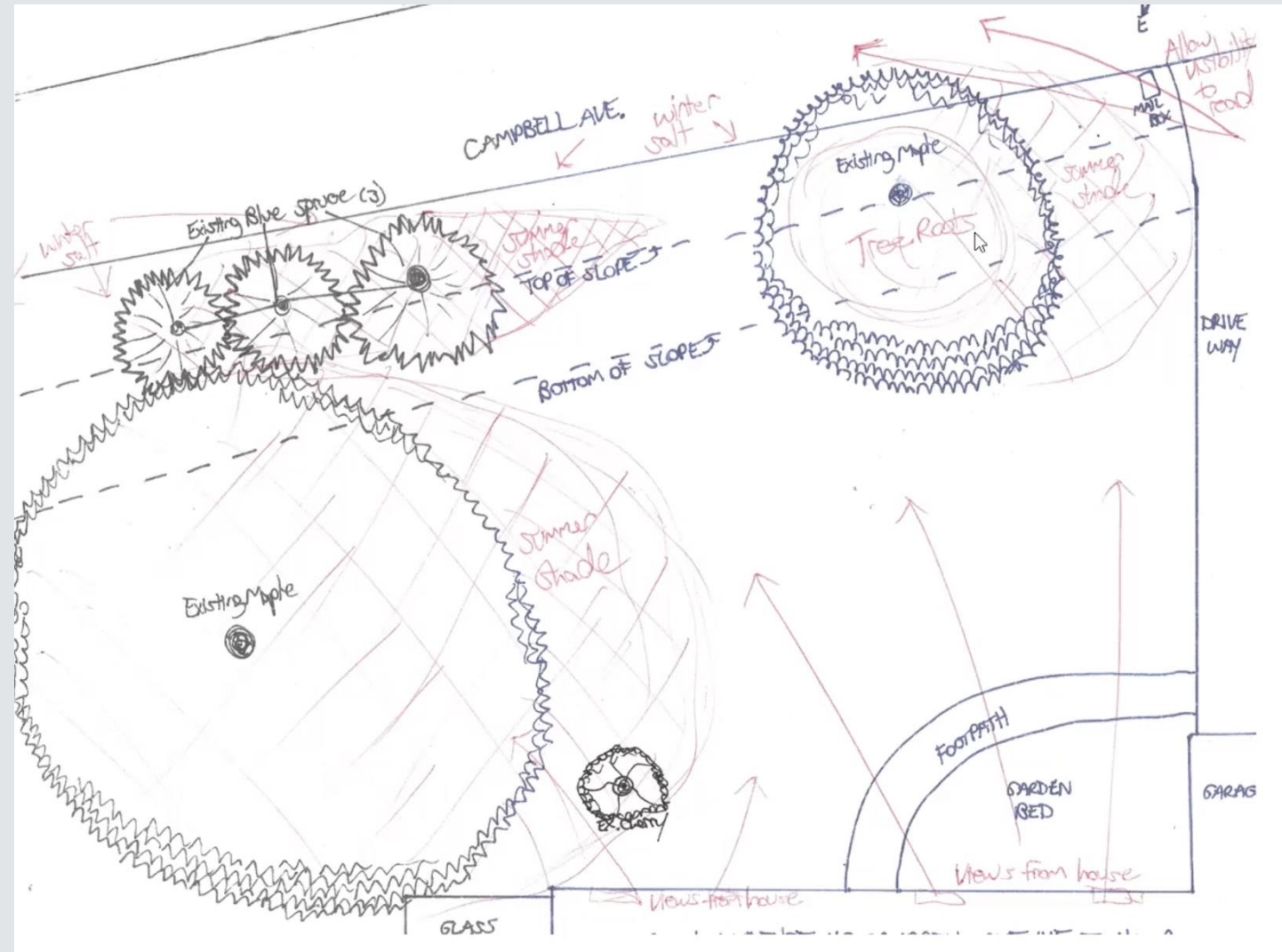
- existing trees
- road
- building
- footpath

This map is drawn to scale on graph paper, but you may continue to use your initial sketch for the site assessment activities if you prefer.

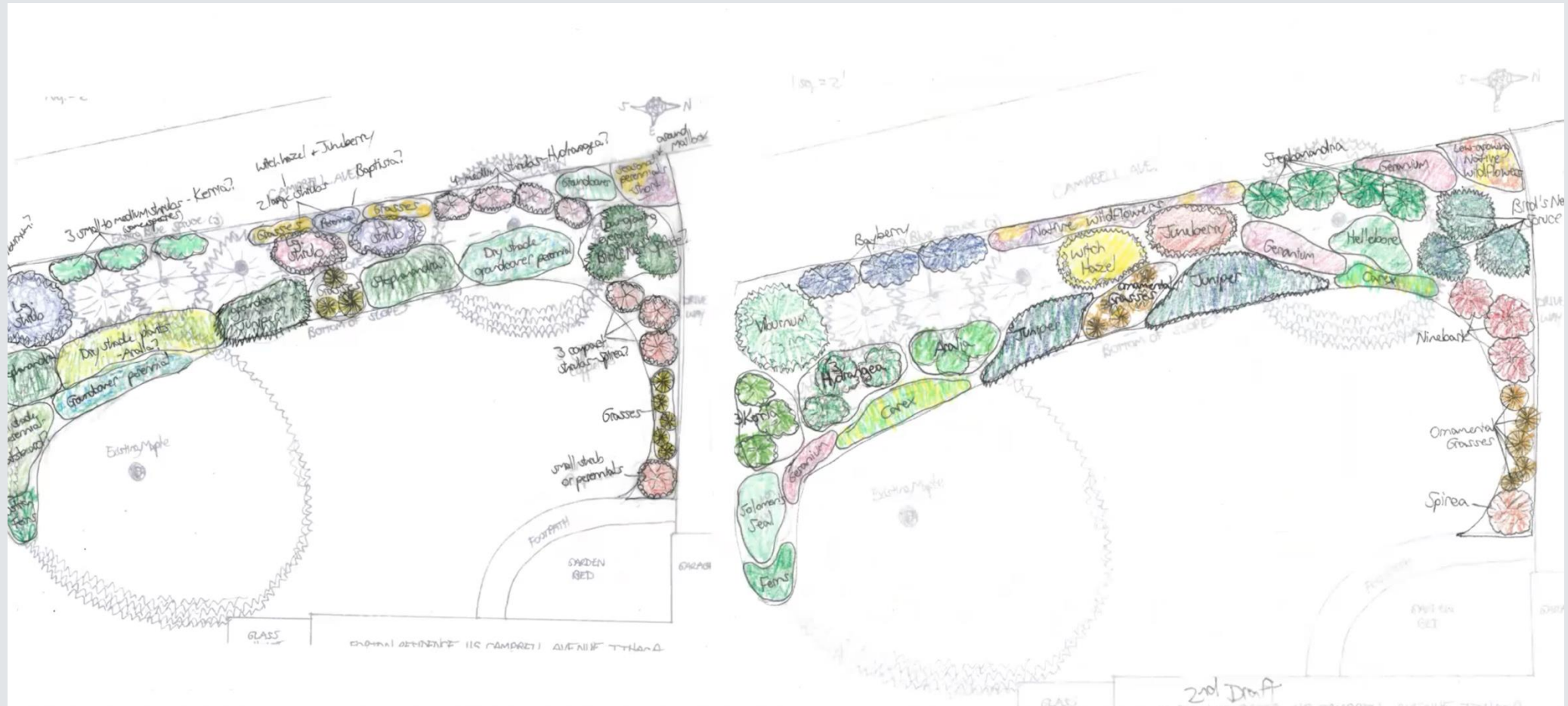
Tip: Use pencil initially, then go over the lines with ink. It will be easier to see your base map when you are using tracing paper over it.



Base map with site conditions on a separate layer



Know your site conditions, then draft design ideas over the base map



Drawing to scale

US Measurement

- Graph paper: 1 square = 1' or 2'
- Ruler: choose a scale that works for the size of your space
- Standard scales are $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{8}$ = one foot
- Architectural ruler- triangular sides have different scales



Metric Measurement

- Architects use millimeters (mm) and meters (m), but not centimeters (cm).
- The colon ':' in a scale is pronounced 'to,' so 1:100 is spoken as 'one to one hundred.'
- While scales like 1:25, 1:30, and 1:250 may appear, it's standard practice to use 1:20, 1:50, and 1:200 instead.

Site Assessment is on-going

Observe your site conditions year-round

- **Seasonal, daily and yearly changes**

- *Sun and shade patterns*
- *Soil moisture*
- *Trees grow and areas cast shade over time*

- **Tips:**

- *Knowing location of underground utilities is very important - call before you dig!*
- *Take photos of your garden space throughout the year*



PALS-1

SITE ASSESSMENT

for Better Gardens and Landscapes



Charles P. Mazza

Site Assessment Checklist

(make copies as needed)

Date _____ Location _____ Size (FROM STEP 1) _____

OBSTRUCTIONS

Below ground (FROM STEP 2):

☐ utilities shown on sketch ☐ irrigation system shown on sketch

Above-ground (FROM STEP 2):

☐ overhead wires (estimated height _____) shown on sketch

LOCAL CLIMATE

Sunlight levels (FROM STEP 3):

☐ full sun (6 hrs. or more) ☐ partial sun or filtered light ☐ shade

USDA hardiness zone (FROM STEP 4): __7__6__5__4__3__2

last spring frost _____ first fall frost _____

Microclimatic factors (FROM STEP 4):

☐ reflected heat load ☐ frost pocket ☐ locations shown on sketch
☐ climate moderated ☐ rain shadow

Wind (FROM STEP 5):

☐ overall windy site ☐ windy in isolated sections ☐ relatively calm
☐ windy locations shown on sketch

SOIL FACTORS

Compaction (FROM STEP 6):

☐ compacted ☐ partially compacted ☐ compacted areas shown on sketch

Drainage characteristics (FROM STEP 7): ☐ wet ☐ well-drained ☐ dry

☐ wet or dry areas shown on sketch

Infiltration rating (FROM STEP 7): ☐ poor ☐ moderate ☐ good ☐ excessive

Percolation rating (FROM STEP 7): ☐ poor ☐ moderate ☐ excessive

Texture (FROM STEP 8): ☐ clayey ☐ loamy ☐ sandy ☐ silty

Soil pH (FROM STEP 8) _____

OBSERVATIONS

☐ unsafe areas (FROM STEP 1)

☐ recent construction (FROM STEP 6)

☐ clods with gray color or foul odor (FROM STEP 7)

☐ low lying spots that collect rain water (FROM STEP 7)

☐ topsoil was removed (FROM STEP 8) ☐ excessive salt usage (FROM STEP 8)

☐ soil contamination (FROM STEP 8) ☐ erosion (FROM STEP 9)

Slopes (FROM STEP 9): ☐ very steep ☐ steep ☐ moderate
☐ gradual or flat ☐ sloped areas shown on sketch

Interference from wildlife (FROM STEP 10): ☐ serious and obvious concerns
☐ marginal concerns to track ☐ not a problem now

Existing plants (FROM STEP 11):

_____ total number of trees _____ total number of shrubs

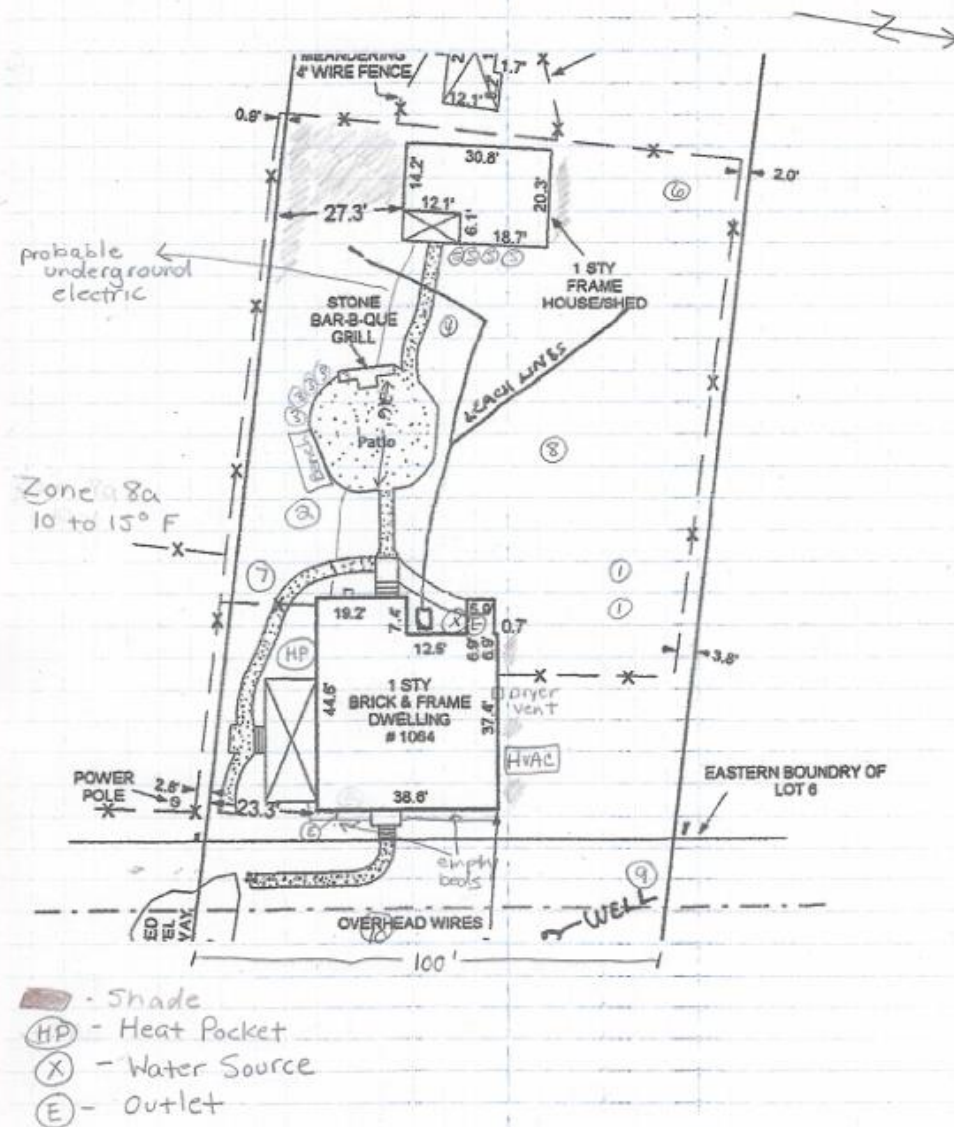
☐ presence of noxious weeds

☐ presence of plants that may indicate poorly drained spots (FROM STEP 7)

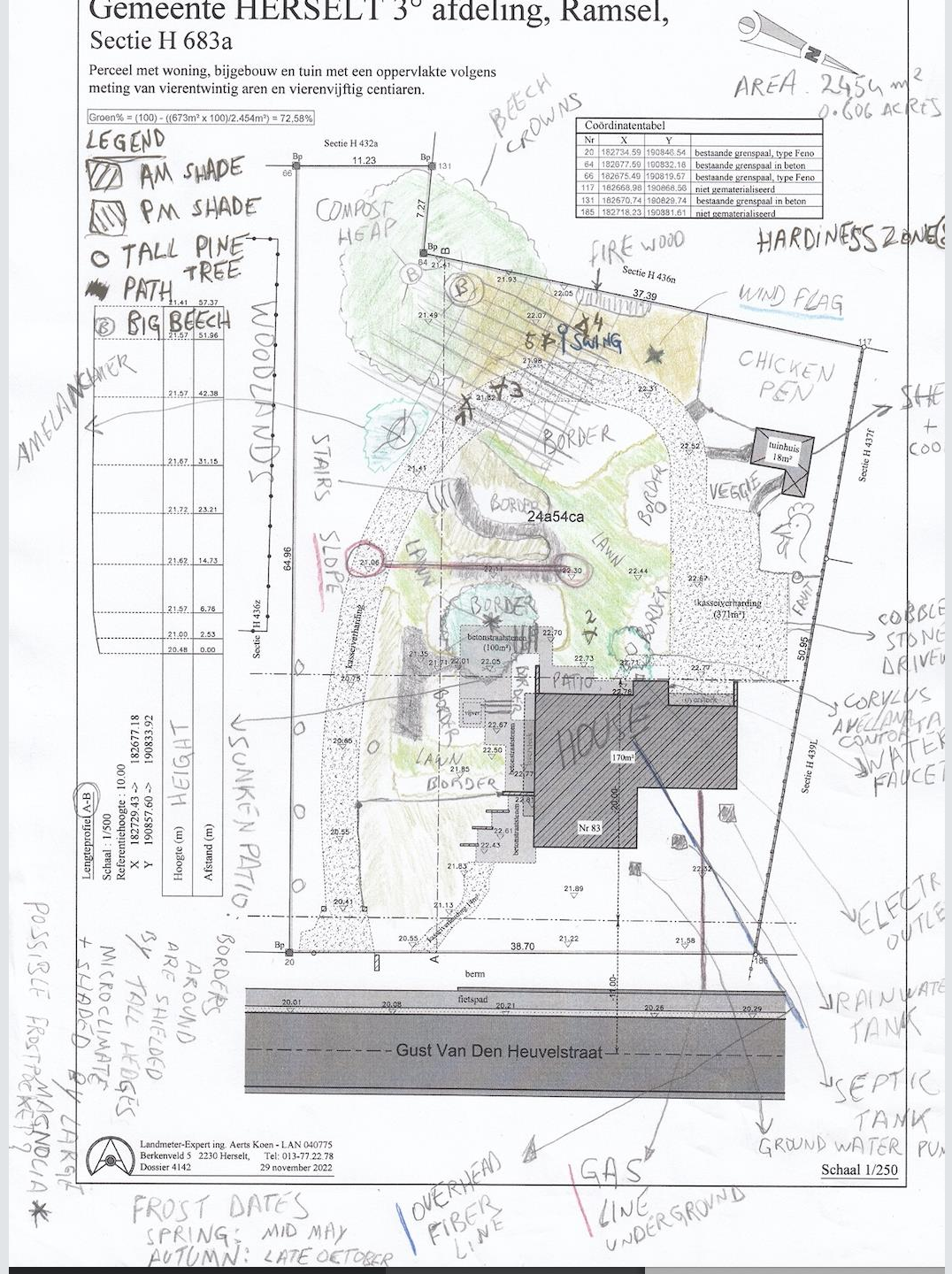
*Student examples of
Base Maps*

Survey Map

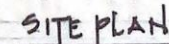
- ① Pear tree
- ② Pecan tree
- ③ Daffodils
- ④ Unknown tree
- ⑤ Hydrangeas
- ⑥ Ornamental cherry tree
- ⑦ Unknown bush
- ⑧ Dying Maple tree
- ⑨ Unknown conifer
- ⑩ Maple tree



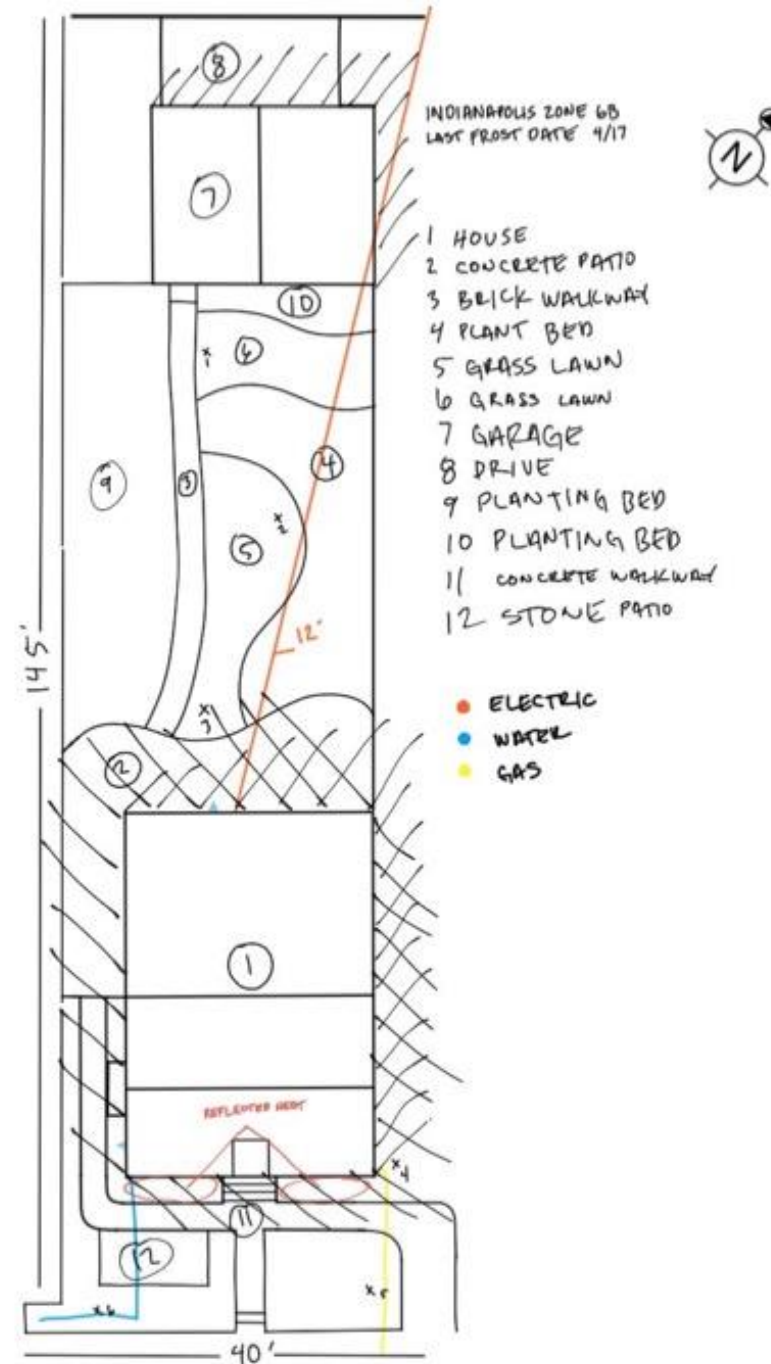
Sander, Introduction to Garden Design



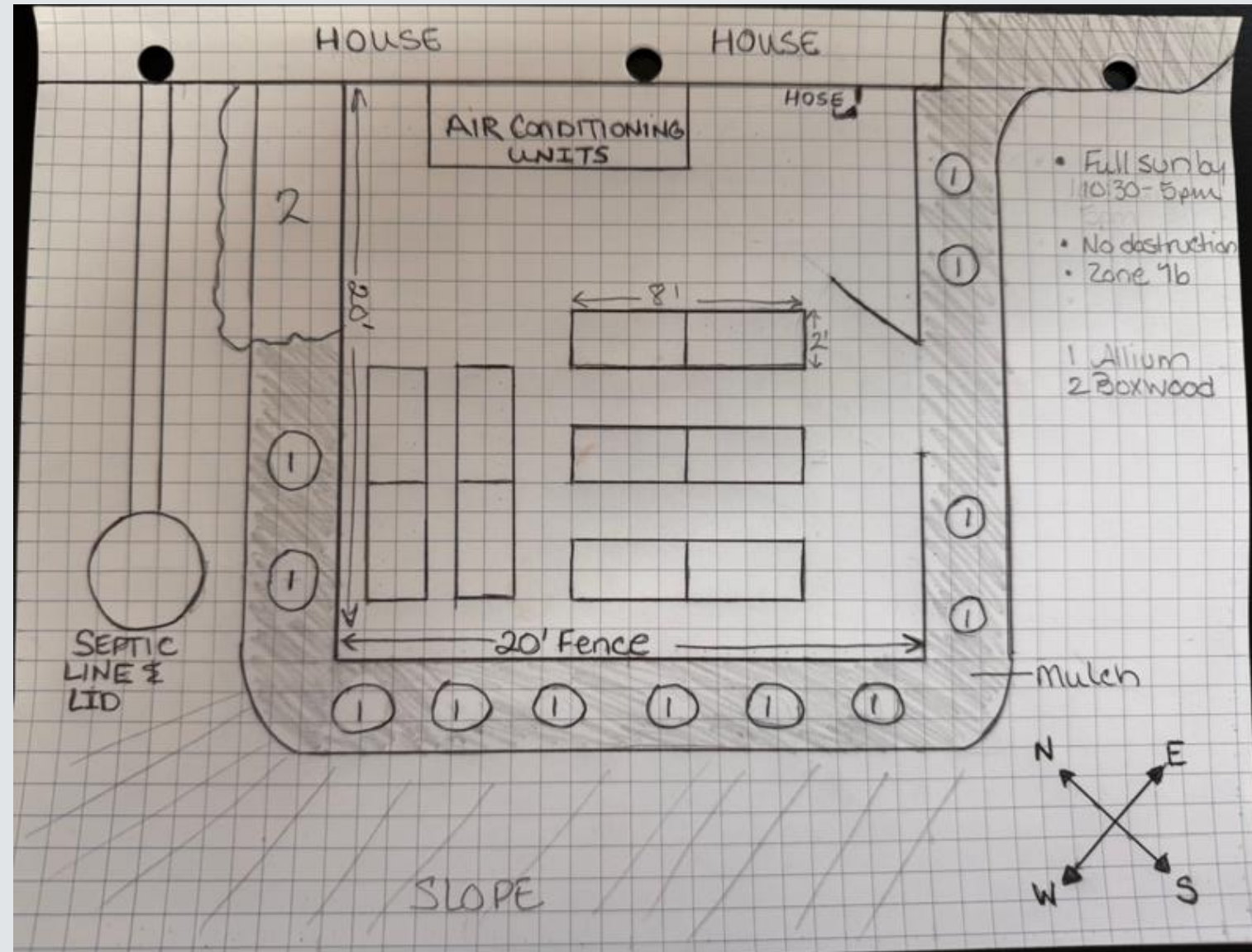
Kimberly, Introduction to Garden Design



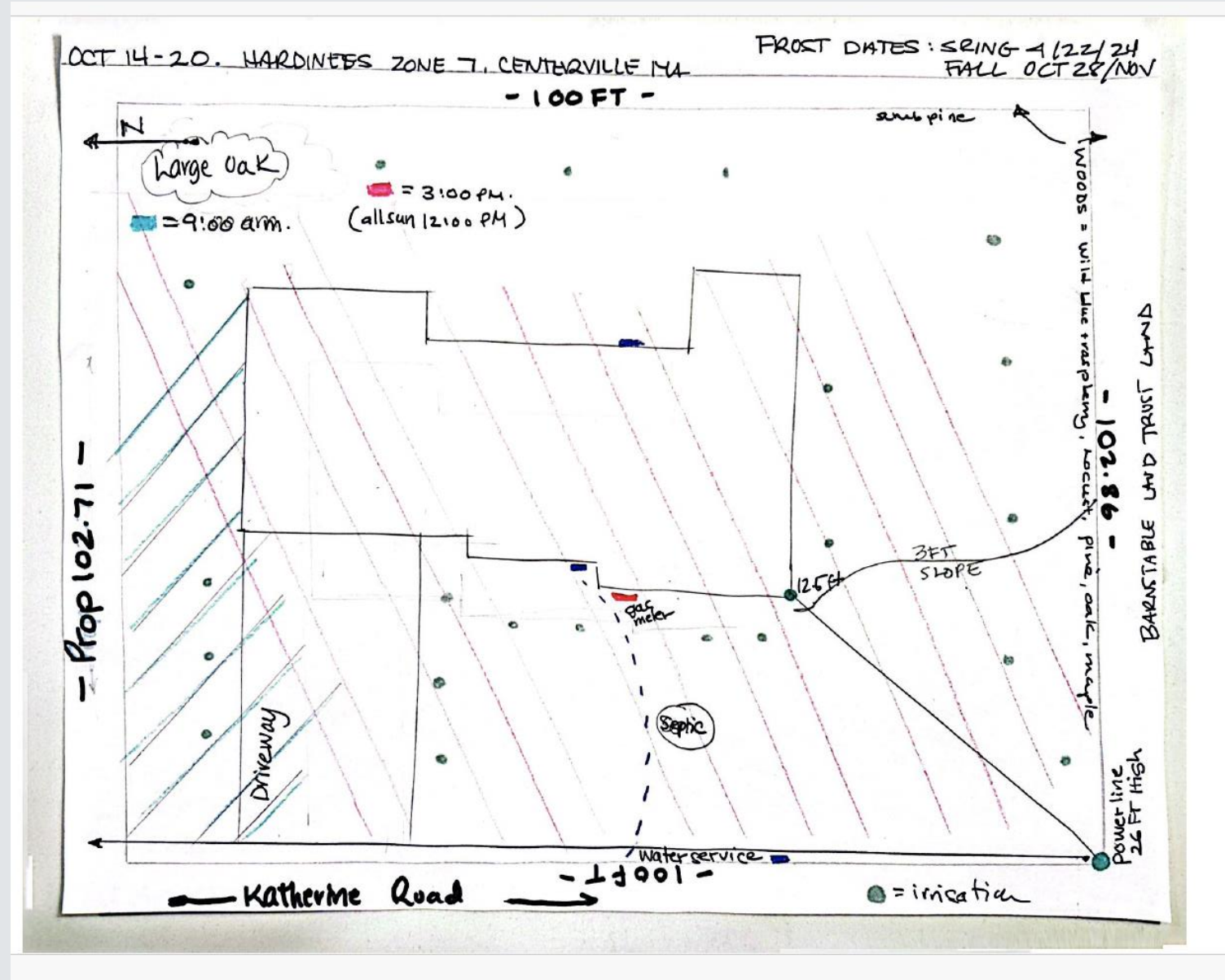
Hand-drawn



Hand-drawn

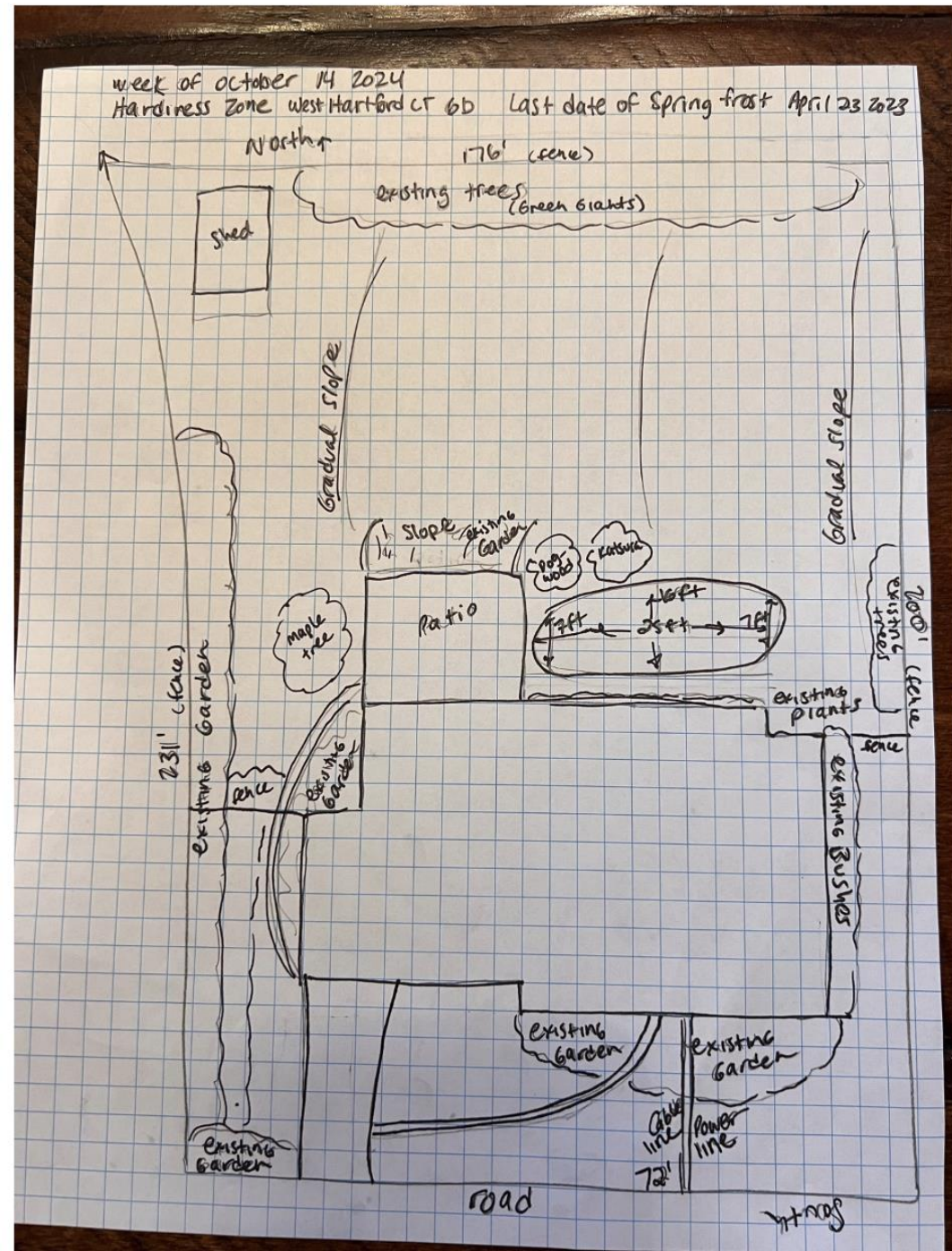


Hand-drawn

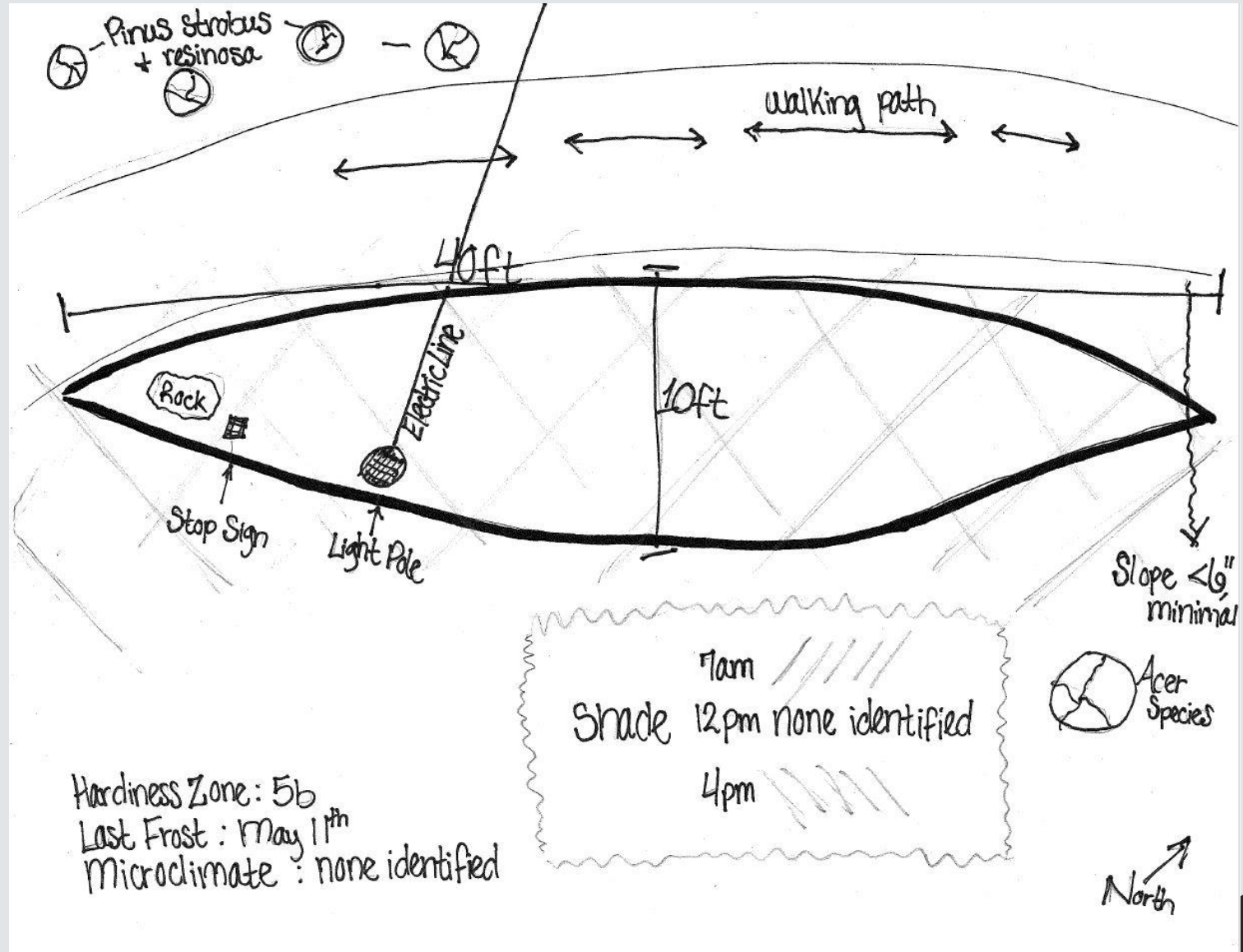


Hand-drawn

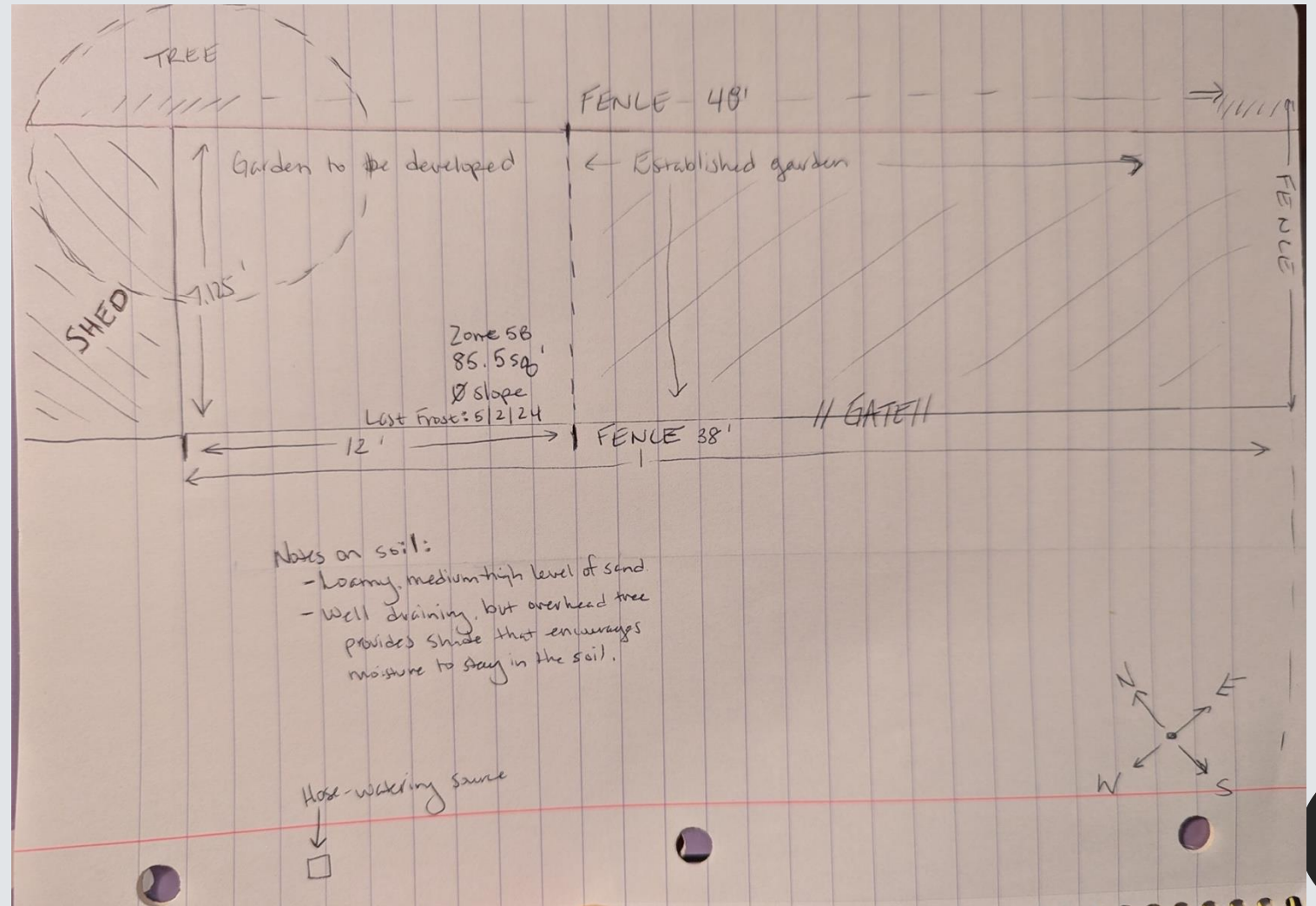
Alexis, Introduction to Garden Design



Hand-drawn



Hand-drawn



A photograph of a well-maintained garden. In the foreground, a low, rustic stone wall runs across the frame. Behind the wall, there are various plants, including tall purple flowers and green foliage. Two black lantern-style garden lights are visible. In the background, a white house with a balcony and white railings is partially visible. A white pickup truck is parked on the left side of the house. The overall scene is a peaceful and attractive garden setting.

*Questions? Reach out to
Donna via Moodle Messaging*
