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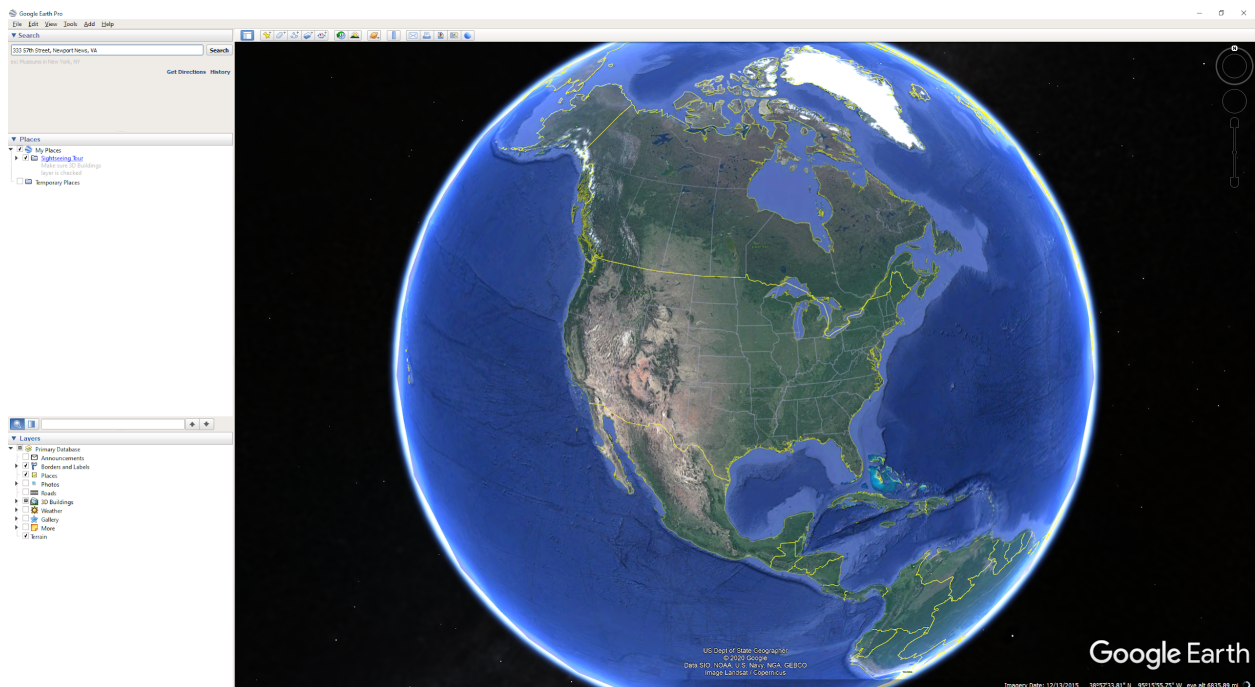
[Checking for Encroachment & Adverse Possession](#)

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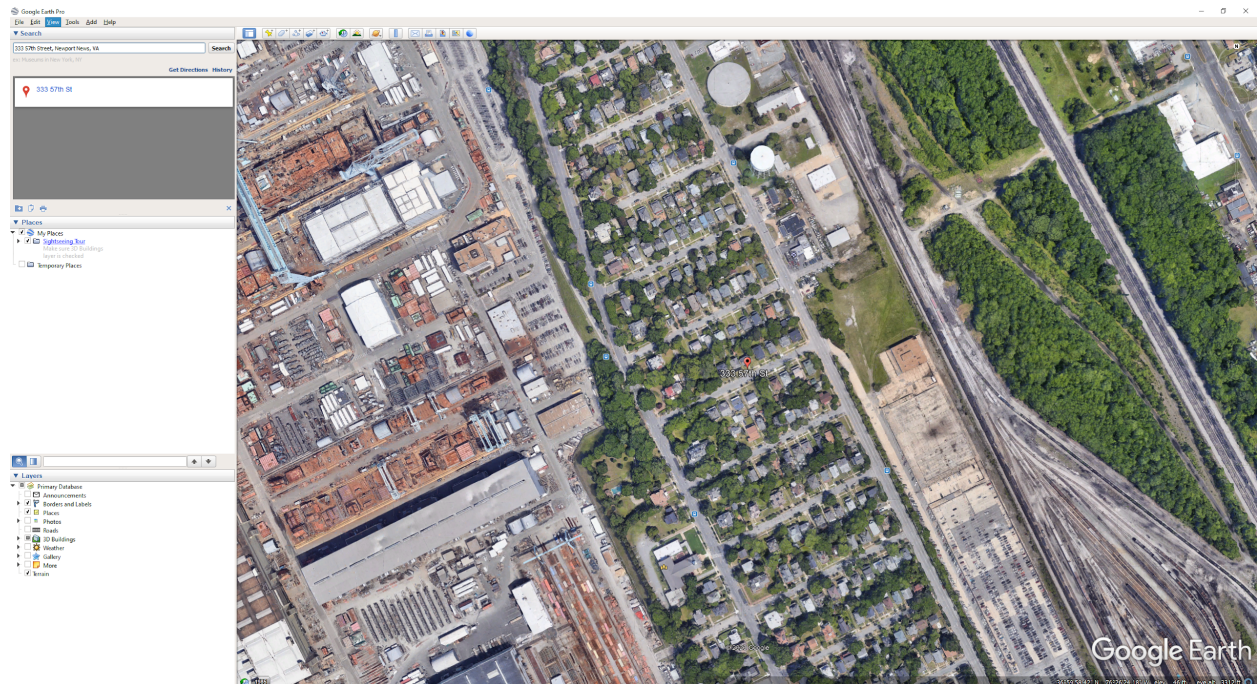
How to check for adverse possession

By Adam Garrett with Garrett Realty Partners

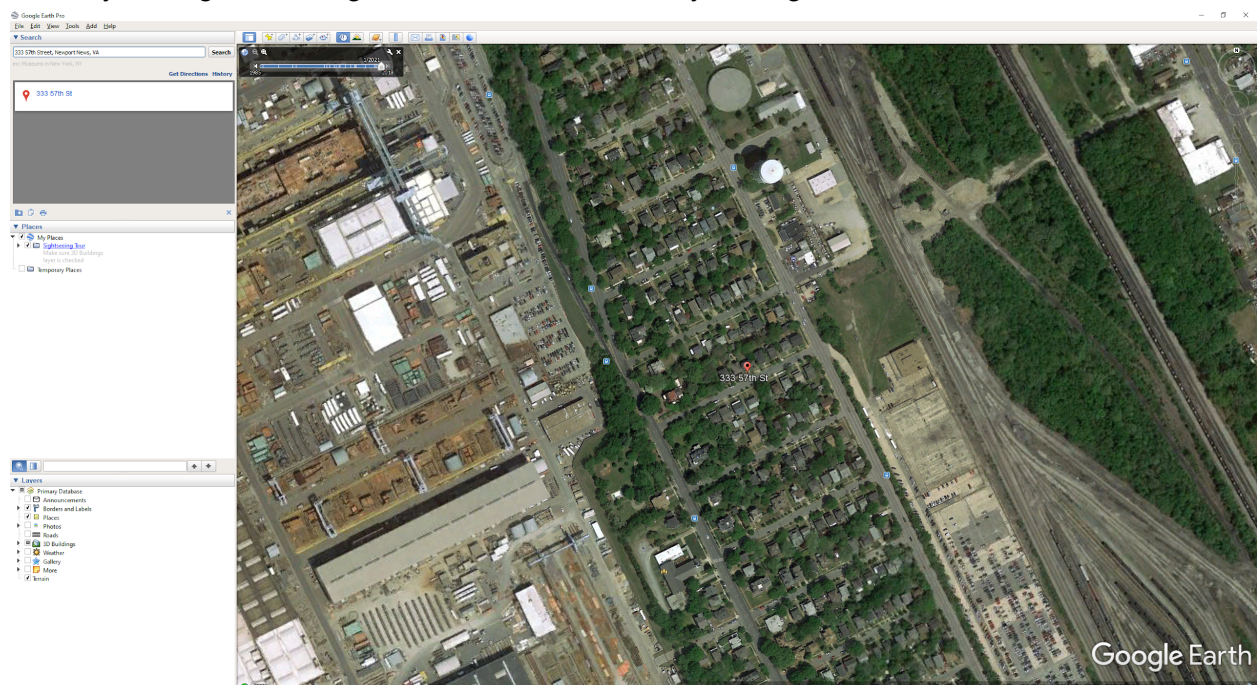
1. First locate the potential encroachment on Matrix (shifting between [map view](#) and aerial view) &/or the [tax records](#) (with the latter having typically higher accuracy). Be sure to note the directional impact of images for satellite images based on looking at the different sides of a building or other fixture (i.e. a fence or wall). You can confirm whether or not encroachment exists (since plots without a survey may be inaccurate) with a [survey](#).
2. [Download Google Earth](#) on a desktop/laptop if you haven't already (the web desktop version won't work for what's next)
3. Input the property address into Google Earth's downloaded program on a desktop/laptop on the top left & hit enter or click "search".



4. Go to view on the top left and check the box for "[historical imagery](#)"



5. You should now see the option to go back as far as the images will go (with typically lower quality the further you go back, but with many expectations between photos so be sure to check at least a few) by using the arrows on the sides to gradually shift to 15 years ago, checking also between 15 and 20 years ago.



6. Go back 15 years, noting “A trespasser’s possession must be 1) hostile (against the right of the true owner and without permission); 2) actual (exercising control over the property); 3) exclusive (within the

possession of the trespasser alone); 4) open and notorious (using the property as the real owner would, without hiding his or her occupancy), and 5) continuous for the statutory period (which is 15 years in Virginia, under [Va. Code Ann. § 8.01-236](#)).”

<https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/who-can-claim-property-based-adverse-possession-virginia.html>

If you aren't getting sufficient imagery with Google Earth, look elsewhere, i.e. the aerial photography layers for Newport News:

<https://maps.nnva.gov/viewer/>