(Approx. 735 words)

Long For The Days Before the World Could View Your Home? Blur Your Home On Google Maps, Apple Maps & Bing Maps



By Kurt Jefferson, Editor, CKCS Newsletter

October 2022 Issue

https://ckcs.org/

lextown2 (at) gmail.com

Remember the old days when almost no one knew your home’s appearance except you, your neighbors, the property tax assessor, your letter carrier, and friends?

Sure, your cousins in Somerset had visited, so they knew you lived in a ranch house built in the 70s. And your uncle and aunt from Utica had seen snapshots you mailed them. And, of course, the milkman, UPS, and FedEx drivers, as well as men and women driving other delivery and repair vans, had been to your home. (There was no Amazon in those days.)

Leap forward to today, and anyone can get a glimpse of your home thanks to Google Maps, Apple Maps, and Bing Maps.

As Lifehacker [writes](https://lifehacker.com/how-to-hide-your-house-from-nosy-people-on-google-maps-1847606586), “With the rise of increasingly convenient features such as street-level 360º photos available on Google Maps and other competing mapping services, there’s always a risk your personal data will be captured in a publicly available photo in a way you’d rather avoid—whether that means the outside of your house or the location where you park your car.”

Google Maps

To blur your home’s image, Lifehacker provides these steps:

Open Google Maps and search for your address or a nearby landmark. You should see a left pane window. Click on the Street View tab and choose an image where your home is shown. On the upper left-hand corner of the image, you should see an icon showing three dots. Click on those and select Report a problem. Lifehacker writes, “This will show you a page where you can select the area to be blurred. Click and drag on the image to point the red square towards your house (you can also shift it to focus on a car or anything else visible in the photo). Then, under Request blurring, select My home. After that, share your email address, check the captcha box, and click Submit.”

Lifehacker says Google will review your request and blur your home on the map.

Remember, your home may stand out even more if your neighbors’ homes are not blurred.

Apple Maps

Apple offers a similar feature called Look Around. Unfortunately, it looks a lot like Google Street view.

If you locate your home and want it removed, Lifehacker suggests you send an email to: [mapsimagecollection@apple.com](mailto:mapsimagecollection@apple.com)

Describe your issue in detail and request that your home be blurred. Lifehacker says Apple will review your request and hide your home – generally within a week.

Again, if you hide your house and your neighbors don’t, your location will stand out even more.

Bing Maps

StreetSide is what Microsoft calls its service that’s similar to both Google Maps and Apple Maps. If you locate your home in StreetSide, you can also ask Microsoft to hide it there. Lifehacker says Microsoft reviews these requests and will remove data within 30 to 60 days.

To make a request, open Bing Maps. Then navigate to your home address.

Scroll down and click any image with the StreetSide label in the left panel. You should see a 360º view of the entire area. To make a report, click Report a privacy concern with this image in the bottom left-hand corner.

A page should open where you can choose House next to the question, “What kind of a concern do you have?”

Lifehacker urges you to click on the portion of the image containing your home. You should see a red dot on the image that will label this part. Then, click submit to send the image to Microsoft.

An individual identifying himself (or herself) as kikurimu comments on the Lifehacker article. He mentions that once you complete this process for Google Maps, they will not UNDO it. Ever. Period. “Whoever lives there after you will never be able to get it undone. Many people have tried. Google can/will not undo it,” writes the individual.

Another commentator on Lifehacker writes, “be aware: nothing draws attention like something blurred out. “There must be something interesting there, let’s go see in real life.” Although, at a certain point, military stuff (in The Netherlands at least) was blurred on the satellite images of Google maps, never was it easier to find it – the more obscure stuff not many people knew about.”