



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
REPORT

MEETING DATE: 06/26/2024

ITEM NO: 4

DATE: June 21, 2024

TO: Historic Preservation Committee

FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Requesting Approval for Construction of Exterior Alterations (Siding, Window, and Door Replacement) to a Non-Contributing Single-Family Residence Located in the Broadway Historic District on Property Zoned R-1D:LHP. **Located at 19 Clifton Avenue.** APN 510-45-082. Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301: Existing Facilities. Minor Development in a Historic District Application HS-24-036. Property Owner: Carriage House LLC. Applicant: Jonathan Schantz. Project Planner: Suray Nathan

RECOMMENDATION:

Requesting approval for construction of exterior alterations (siding, window, and door replacement) to an existing non-contributing single-family residence located in the Broadway Historic District on property Zoned R-1D:LHP located at 19 Clifton Avenue.

PROPERTY DETAILS:

1. Date primary structure was built: 1900
2. Town of Los Gatos Historic Status Code: None
3. Does property have an LHP Overlay? Yes
4. Is structure in a historic district? Yes, Broadway Historic District
5. If yes, is it a contributor? No
6. Findings required? Yes
7. Considerations required? Yes

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is located on the east side of Clifton Avenue, approximately 135 feet south of Broadway. The County Assessor indicates that the residence at 19 Clifton Avenue was constructed in 1900, but the property was not included in the Anne Bloomfield Survey. The

PREPARED BY: Suray Nathan
Assistant Planner

BACKGROUND (continued):

subject property does not appear on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps until 1904 (Attachment 1). The primary residence remains unchanged throughout the map iterations. A review of Town records did not yield any permits for improvements.

On May 13, 2024, it was brought to the Town's attention that work had progressed on the site without the required permits. Staff observed that some siding had been removed on the west (street-facing), east, and north elevations (Attachment 2). On May 15, 2024, the Town issued a Stop Work Notice for unpermitted work related to the removal of the siding on the residence. Staff contacted the applicant to inform them that review of the necessary permits by the Town's Historic Preservation Committee is required. An application for historic review was submitted on April 30, 2024. Staff coordinated with the applicant to obtain the information needed for this review and confirmed that the unpermitted work has not resulted in a technical demolition.

DISCUSSION:

The existing residence includes redwood siding, wood trim, wood windows, and a composition roof (Attachment 3). The unpermitted work included removal of 11 percent of the siding on the street-facing (west) elevation (Attachment 5). On the east elevation, 44 percent of the siding and two windows were removed. On the north elevation, 47 percent of the siding, a window, and two glass-paneled doors were removed. On the south elevation, 4 percent of the redwood siding was removed. In total, 27 percent of the siding on all elevations was removed. The siding removal that has occurred to date does not constitute a technical demolition since it does not exceed the Town Code limitations for demolition of historic structures.

The applicant requests approval to remove the existing horizontal wood siding and replace it in-kind to match the existing material, size, and profile (Attachment 3). The applicant indicates that the existing wood siding is in poor condition with rotting section, mismatched pieces, and missing areas. To rectify this, the applicant proposes full in-kind replacement to restore the residence to its original appearance and historic character. Additionally, full replacement would allow for new waterproofing to be installed. The complete siding replacement would trigger technical demolition; however, the Town Code clarifies that the removal and replacement of in-kind, non-repairable exterior wall covering resulting in no change to its exterior appearance or historic character is exempt from the above definition when approved by the deciding body. The applicant is seeking a determination from the Committee that the removal and replacement in-kind of the siding is appropriate and, therefore, exempt from the demolition definition. Should the Committee find merit in the request, Town staff could approve the changes as a Building Permit.

DISCUSSION (continued):

The applicant also requests approval to replace the existing windows and doors with fiberglass-clad wood windows and doors (Attachment 4). The dominant material of the existing windows and doors is wood. The applicant indicates that the Marvin “Ultimate Series” wood-clad fiberglass windows and patio doors would match the appearance of the wood windows and patio doors while offering increasing efficiency and less maintenance (Attachment 3). Additionally, the proposed windows and doors would match the style and pattern of the existing windows and doors, and the doors will utilize simulated divided lites of the existing patio doors. With one exception, the new windows and doors would be installed within existing openings without increasing the size or modifying the shape of the existing windows or doors. The applicant indicated to staff that some existing vinyl windows at the rear of the residence have already been removed. While inspecting the framing, it was found that the smaller vinyl windows were installed within larger original openings. The applicant proposes to install windows to match the framed openings consistent with the original windows on the residence.

The Residential Design Guidelines provides the following recommendations related to window materials:

3.7.3 Match window materials to the architectural style and the surrounding neighborhood

- Wood windows are common in Los Gatos. Wood is still the desired choice for styles that traditionally used wood. However, today there are some window materials, such as vinyl clad wood windows that are not noticeably different from wood at a short distance.

4.8.2 Building Materials

- Composite, synthetic, metal, vinyl, plastic or fabricated/imitation wood products, painted brick or imitation used brick will generally not be approved. However, some exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis when the decision-making body determines that the replacement is consistent with the appearance of the original material, and that a lay person would be unlikely to discern the difference. The burden of proof will reside with the applicant. Material samples, photographs, and specific locations where the material may be seen in use will all assist in the evaluation of alternative materials.

DISCUSSION (continued):

4.8.4 Windows and Glass in doors

- Windows should be constructed of real glass, and window frames should be constructed of real wood - not vinyl, metal, or plastic. Wood sashes may be vinyl or metal clad if the window frame and dressing is designed consistent with the historic context of the building.

The proposed fiberglass composite material was unavailable when the Guidelines were written, and it is silent on its use. The Guidelines emphasize the use of wood windows but allows exceptions for alternative materials when they are not noticeably different from wood at a short distance, found to be consistent with the historic context, and consistent with the appearance of the original material where it would be unlikely to discern the difference.

The applicant requests approval of the alternative window materials and provided a Letter of Justification and details on the proposed windows (Attachments 3 and 4).

CONCLUSION:

The applicant is requesting approval for the construction of exterior alterations (siding, window, and door replacement) to a non-contributing single-family residence located in the Broadway Historic District. Should the Committee find merit in the proposed request, it should make the following findings and considerations and forward a recommendation of approval to the Community Development Director. The project would then be completed with a Building Permit. The project would not return to the Committee.

FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

A. Findings

Sec. 29.10.020. Demolition (*historic structures*)

All remaining exterior walls must be contiguous and must retain the existing exterior wall covering. No new exterior wall covering shall be permitted over the existing exterior wall covering. The following are exempt from this definition:

- ☐ a. *Replacement.* The exterior wall covering may be removed if the covering is not original to the structure.
- ☒ b. *Repair.* The removal and replacement of in kind non-repairable exterior wall covering (siding) resulting in no change to its exterior appearance or historic character if approved by the deciding body.

FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS (continued):

- _____ c. *Removal.* The removal of an addition(s) that is not part of the original structure and which has no historic significance, as determined by the Historic Preservation Committee. Demolition shall be determined by subsections (1) and (2) above for the original structure, where walls enclosed by additions shall be considered as exterior walls.

B. Considerations

Sec. 29.80.290. Standards for review.

In evaluating applications, the deciding body shall consider the architectural style, design, arrangement, texture, materials and color, and other pertinent factors. Applications shall not be granted unless:

- X In historic districts, the proposed work will neither adversely affect the exterior architectural characteristics or other features of the property, which is the subject of the application, nor adversely affect its relationship, in terms of harmony and appropriateness, with its surroundings, including neighboring structures, nor adversely affect the character, or the historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value of the district.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Sanborn Exhibit
2. Photos
3. Letter of Justification
4. Window Specifications
5. Development Plans

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