

February 4, 2026

Town of Los Gatos – Community Development
Civic Center
101 E. Main Street
Los Gatos, CA 95030

Attn: Sean Mullins – Planner/Project Coordinator
Re: Application to Request for Approval of an Alternate Exterior Siding Material
APN: 529-20-006

Dear Historical Preservation Committee,

This Letter of Justification is submitted in support of our request for approval of an alternative exterior siding material pursuant to the Town of Los Gatos Residential Design Guidelines, specifically Sections 3.8.1 (Use High Quality Materials) and 4.8.2 (Building Materials – Historic Resources).

Existing Conditions and Design Intent

The existing residence incorporates traditional V-groove wood siding that contributes to the historic architectural character of the structure and the surrounding neighborhood. The intent of the project is to retain this established character while addressing current life-safety considerations through the use of an alternative material that is visually compatible with the original siding.

Proposed Alternative Material

We propose the use of **James Hardie Artisan Artisan V-groove fiber cement siding** as an alternative to the existing V-groove wood siding, a product line designed to replicate the historical material. This product has been selected because its **profile, scale, and overall appearance closely match** traditional V-groove wood siding, while providing enhanced fire resistance and durability.

Consistency with Residential Design Guidelines §3.8.1

Section 3.8.1 encourages high-quality materials that are consistent with the selected architectural style and recognizes that some modern substitute materials may be appropriate when they convincingly reflect traditional materials.

The proposed siding complies with this guideline in that:

- It is consistent with the home’s historic architectural style and preserves its visual character.
- The material meets the guideline’s authenticity, appearing similar to traditional wood siding when viewed from **approximately 3 feet at the first floor**.
- The smooth finish avoids rough textures and aligns with the Town’s preference for refined exterior finishes.

Fiber cement is a durable and resilient material that supports sustainability while reducing fire risk.

Consistency with Residential Design Guidelines §4.8.2

Section 4.8.2 allows consideration of alternative materials on a case-by-case basis when the replacement is consistent with the appearance of the original material and when a lay person would be unlikely to discern the difference.

The proposed Hardie Artisan V-groove siding is consistent with this intent for the following reasons:

- The material utilizes a V-groove profile that closely reflects the **shape, size, dimension, texture and pattern** of the existing wood siding, maintaining the established facade pattern.
- When installed and painted, the material presents a **visually compatible appearance** with the original wood siding that a lay person would be unlikely to discern the difference.
- Use of the original wood siding material is not feasible due to **fire safety considerations**. Fiber cement siding provides improved fire resistance and enhanced life safety, which is consistent with Section 4.8.2’s allowance for alternative materials when health and safety concerns are present.

Hardie Artisan V-groove closely matches the appearance of the original wood siding in profile, texture, and visual character such that a lay person would not perceive a difference, while also addressing critical fire safety and life-safety concerns that make reuse of wood infeasible.

Material Samples and Visual Comparison

To substantiate the visual compatibility of the proposed material, we have provided the following documentation:

- Generative AI renderings depicting the residence with existing wood siding and the proposed James Artisan Hardie V-groove siding, viewed at a 3-foot distance, suggest a visually compatible appearance to traditional wood siding.

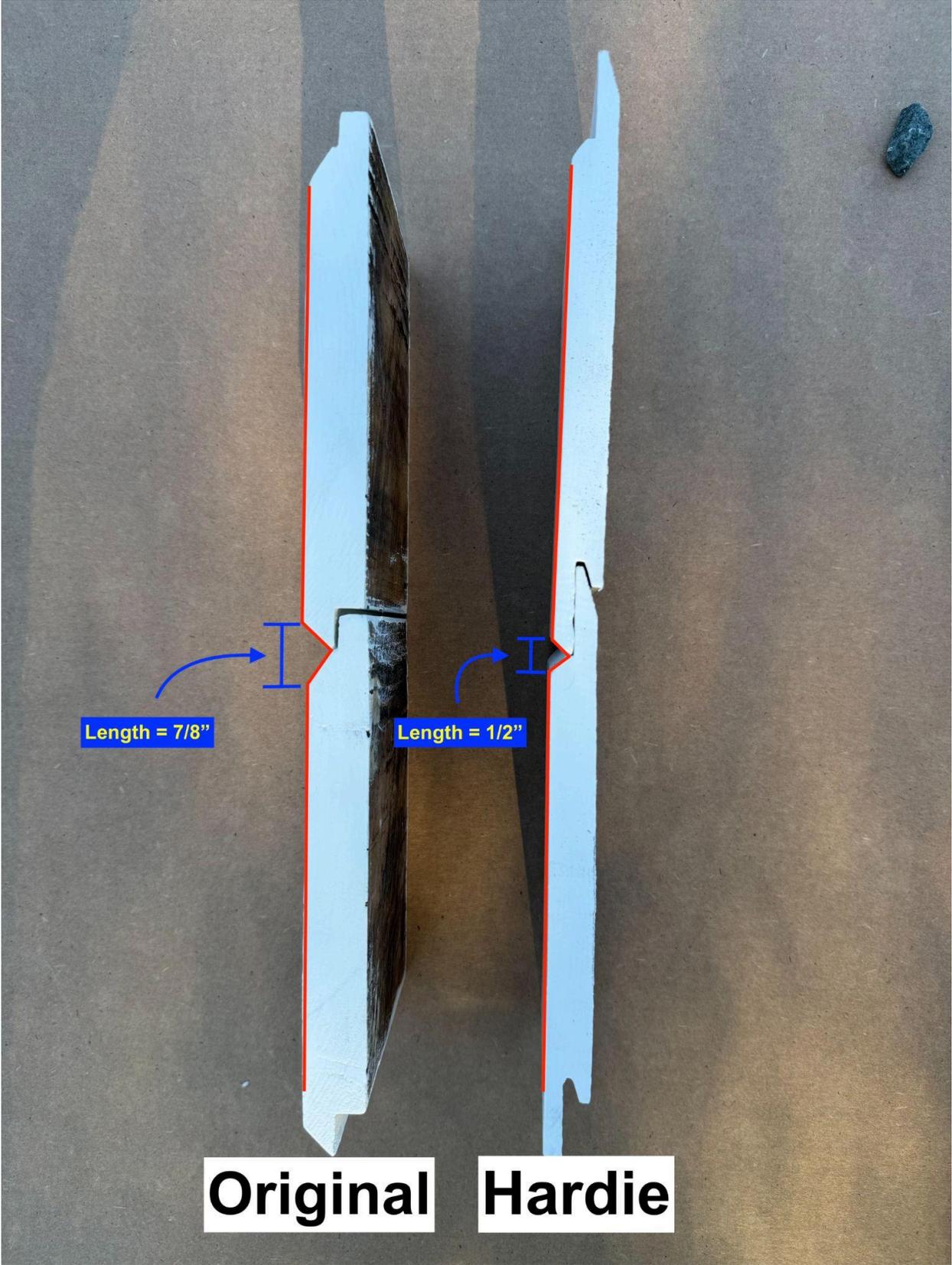


Note: Images generated with AI for conceptual visualization purposes.

- Physical samples of the existing wood siding and the proposed James Hardie Artisan V-groove fiber-cement siding are provided side by side in closeup view for front-elevation comparison, demonstrating consistency with the home's historic architectural style and preservation of its visual character.



- Detailed photographic documentation of both materials showing the profile, illustrating the dimensional and visual characteristics of each. The material utilizes a V-groove profile that closely reflects the shape, size, dimension, texture and pattern of the existing wood siding, maintaining the established facade pattern.



Length = 7/8"

Length = 1/2"

Original

Hardie

- The proposed siding matches the original in visible width and profile, and the minimal difference in thickness has no discernible visual impact from the primary elevation, making the replacement visually indistinguishable to a lay person once installed.

	ORIGINAL WOOD SIDING	JAMES HARDIE SIDING
Thickness	7 / 8 inch	5 / 8 inch
Width	7 inch (exposure)	7 inch (exposure)
Length	Varies	12 feet

Conclusion

The proposed Hardie Artisan V-groove fiber cement siding represents a thoughtful alternative that balances preservation of the residence's historic character with contemporary fire-safety considerations. While not identical to the original wood siding, the proposed material is visually compatible, appropriately scaled, and consistent with the intent of Residential Design Guidelines §§ 3.8.1 and 4.8.2.

Material samples, product specifications, and photographic examples are provided to assist the Town in evaluating the proposed alternative material.

We respectfully request approval of the proposed siding material.

Sincerely,

Nam Nguyen
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