

**Project Address:**  
150 Tait Avenue, Los Gatos, CA

## **Exterior Design & Materials**

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## **I. Project Scope and Architectural Intent**

This project will add a second-floor ADU to an existing one-story contributing property located at 150 Tait Avenue, in the Almond Grove Historic District of Los Gatos. The project will also add a small extension to the back of the home and update the home's exterior and interior. All changes to the existing exterior of the residence will be like-for-like.

The owner, design team, and contractor view themselves as long-term stewards of this historic resource and are committed to ensuring that the home remains structurally sound, weather-tight, and safe for the next century while fully respecting its historic character. Exterior alterations will not otherwise alter the existing roof pitch or footprint of the existing structure. Further, the proposed design will maintain a Craftsman-inspired residential character consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. Exterior finishes will be applied consistently across all elevations. Overall, the project will emphasize horizontal siding, articulated roof forms, restrained trim, and natural materials.

This document details exterior materials, finishes, and architectural consistency for the Historic Preservation Committee's review.

## **II. Location and Neighborhood Context**

Architecturally, 150 Tait Avenue is a classic early-1920s downtown Los Gatos cottage. Typical features include a modest one-story massing, a simple gabled roof form, traditional wood windows, and a prominent covered front porch. These elements are consistent with the historic character of Almond Grove and contribute to the streetscape of Tait Avenue, which includes several homes of similar era and scale as well as larger two-story historic residences and more recent additions.

The property is situated on the corner of Tait Avenue and Nicholson Avenue, within short walking distance of downtown Los Gatos. The surrounding Almond Grove area is characterized by early-20th-century cottages and larger historic homes, many of which have been updated or expanded while maintaining their historic character.

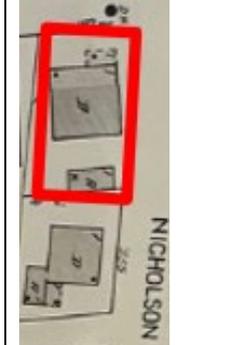
Within the immediate area, several nearby properties have added second stories or undertaken substantial additions while remaining compatible with the historic district. Given its 1917 construction date, small one-story massing, and corner-lot exposure, 150 Tait Avenue is a strong candidate for a sensitively designed second-floor addition that respects the established scale, roof forms, and materials in Almond Grove.

### III. Property History

Public records indicate that 150 Tait was built around 1917. As per the County Assessor’s Office’, the home is approximately 1,136 square feet on a 3,750 square foot corner lot. The home is recorded as having 3 bedrooms and 1 full bathroom, with a detached 1-car garage accessed from Nicholson Avenue. The residence is a detached wood-frame structure on a raised foundation with a composition roof. The building footprint reflects a compact cottage layout, with a covered front porch facing Tait Avenue and yard space along the street frontages. The detached garage is accessed from Nicholson Avenue, which helps preserve the primary street elevation along Tait Avenue.

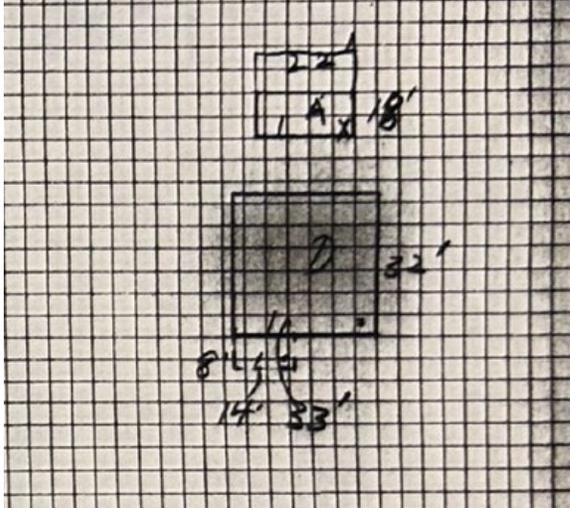
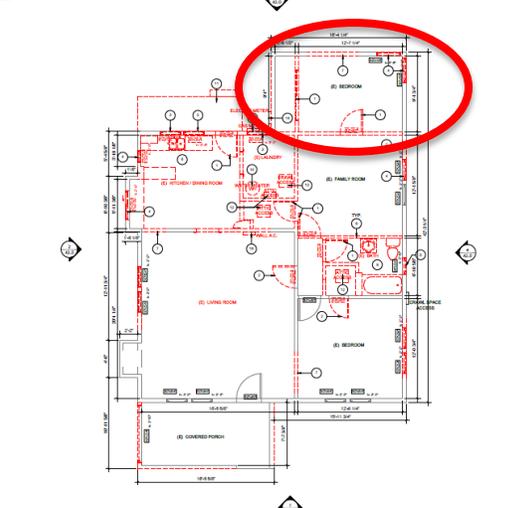
#### A. Findings based on the Sanborn Map History

150 Tait first appeared on the Sanborn Maps in 1944.

1891	1895	1904	1908	1944:
				
<p><b>Vacant lot</b></p>	<p><b>Vacant lot</b></p>	<p><b>Vacant lot</b></p>	<p><b>Vacant lot</b></p>	<p><b>Between 1908 and 1944, the home appears.</b></p>



the home suggesting that the entire home was re-sided either when the 3rd bedroom was added or thereafter.

1941 Assessor Survey: No 3 <sup>rd</sup> bedroom	Current Property with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> bedroom
	

#### IV. Images of Existing Property















V. **Images of Proposed Property (Street Facing Front Elevation)**



# APPENDICES

# **Appendix A: Proposed Windows**

## A. Existing Windows

The existing windows are traditional single-hung wood windows with:

- A divided-light upper sash (multi-lite grille pattern),
- A single-lite lower sash,
- Painted wood frames and trim with flat casing,
- Traditional proportions and narrow sightlines.



## B. Standard for Replacement Windows (Historic Properties)

The Town of Los Gatos applies a like-for-like standard when reviewing replacement windows on historic homes. Wood windows are the preferred and historically appropriate material for most historic residences. Replacement windows are expected to match the original windows in material, appearance, profile, and detailing.<sup>1</sup>

The Residential Design Guidelines allow the use of wood windows with metal or vinyl cladding, provided that the window frame, sash, and exterior detailing are

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<sup>1</sup> [https://mccmeetingspublic.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/losgatos-meet-58edac8fbc9040c9a46e748480f3322d/ITEM-Attachment-001-604e3048969740e29fb2a00f4c7fbd40.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://mccmeetingspublic.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/losgatos-meet-58edac8fbc9040c9a46e748480f3322d/ITEM-Attachment-001-604e3048969740e29fb2a00f4c7fbd40.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

designed in a manner consistent with the historic context of the building. The focus of review is not solely the material itself, but whether the replacement window appears consistent with traditional wood windows.

The Town evaluates whether a replacement window would be indistinguishable from wood at a short distance and whether a lay person would be unlikely to discern a difference from the original material. Composite or synthetic materials are generally discouraged but may be approved on a case-by-case basis if the applicant demonstrates that the appearance closely matches the original through samples, photographs, and examples in use.

When replacement windows meet these criteria and do not change the exterior appearance of the home, they may be approved at the staff level through the building permit process without referral to the Historic Preservation Committee.

### C. Proposed Windows

#### 1. Pella Lifestyle Series Wood Clad Windows



5/8" Putty Glaze Integral Light Technology

The homeowner is requesting approval to install Pella Lifestyles Wood Clad windows with Low-E, argon-filled, double-pane glazing. These windows offer the beauty and durability of wood combined with style flexibility.

All windows will have:

- Historically appropriate sash proportions and profiles
- A painted exterior appearance resembling traditional painted wood at normal viewing distances

The exterior cladding will be consistent with the visual profile, depth, and detailing of typical Craftsman windows. From the public right-of-way and at normal viewing

distances, the windows will be visually indistinguishable from traditional painted wood windows. These windows align with the Town's replacement window standards because they retain real wood construction look where it is visually and historically significant. In addition, the use of wood clad windows improves durability and reduces ongoing maintenance by protecting against weather exposure and wood deterioration. This approach supports the long-term preservation of the historic structure by extending the service life of the windows while maintaining their historic appearance.

The proposed windows which are to be used for all windows (except two non-street facing windows for two of the three bathrooms) will incorporate three-dimensional Simulated Divided Lites (SDL), reinforcing the Craftsman character of the existing residence, maintaining visual compatibility with the historic design of the home; and remaining visually consistent with traditional wood windows at normal viewing distance.

## **2. Awning Windows for two of the three bathrooms**



Two windows, serving the downstairs bathroom and a small upstairs bathroom, neither of which face the street, will be configured as awning-style windows due to functional requirements. These awning windows will be designed to maintain the same overall visual character, proportions, materials, and trim detailing as the other windows, so they read as fully consistent with the historic window package.

## **3. Proposed Window Casings**



All replacement and new windows will be installed with traditional flat wood casing consistent with historic residential construction, including flat side casings, a substantial flat head casing, and a flat wood sill. The casing will be painted and proportioned to match existing historic windows, ensuring the replacement windows remain visually indistinguishable from the original wood windows. The proposed Pella Lifestyle Series windows will be installed behind the casing, allowing the trim to remain the dominant visual element from the exterior. The casing will:

- Preserve the visual depth of the window opening
- Maintain traditional shadow lines
- Ensure the replacement window reads as a true wood window assembly

# **Appendix B: Proposed Doors**

**A. Front Door**  
**Existing Door**



**Proposed Door**



1. **Style:** Classic Craftsman single door panel
2. **Material:** Fiberglass or solid wood door with glazed upper panel
3. **Finish:** Stained natural wood (transparent stain)
4. **Hardware Finish:** Dark bronze / black

**B. Patio and ADU Doors (Back and Right Side of the House)**

The home has a single door to the back patio. It will be replaced by two Fiberglass French patio doors with Low-E glass similar to those in the picture

below. These doors are not visible from the street and located in the back of the home. For the ADU entrance, which also does not face the street, the homeowner will install a similar single glass panel door.



# Appendix C: Proposed Roofing

### Existing Roof



### Proposed Roof



#### A. Roof Shape and Gables:

**First Floor:** The existing roofing, which consists of two gable style roofs (one over the main home and one over the porch) will remain unchanged in structure but will be refinished with new materials. A roof awning will be added to separate the larger first floor gable from the walls. This is an effective technique to break up large vertical surfaces, add architectural detail, and provide protection from the elements. This type of addition also enhances curb appeal by adding dimension to a flat front.

**Second Floor:** The second floor ADU will also consist of a gable roof that will be placed perpendicular to the existing main gable roof.

The existing and new roof gables will use the same siding used for the exterior walls of the home.

#### B. Roofing Material:

The roof will consist of architectural composition shingles. The color to be determined based on the final home color.

### **C. Roof Trim, Fascia, Rake Boards**

The roof trim, fascia, and rake boards will be painted wood or fiber cement boards.

### **D. Brackets and Rafters**

Brackets: The existing brackets lack any architectural and character-defining features (e.g., intricate molding, specific 19th-century detailing) and do not add to the historical character of the home. For this reason, the homeowner is requesting to remove the brackets in favor of a cleaner, more intentional design of the home.

Rafters: The rafters will remain unchanged and will be painted in the same color as the roof trim, fascia, and rake boards.

### **Existing Corbels and Brackets (Front and Back)**



### **Existing Rafters (Sides)**



# **Appendix D: Proposed Porch**

### Existing Porch



### Proposed Porch



A. **Foundation:** Concrete stem wall, natural gray

#### B. Porch Columns (Upper)

- **Material:** Square wood or wrapped structural columns
- **Location:** Front porch structural supports above masonry base

#### C. Porch Wall, Column Bases & Porch Wainscot

- **Material:** Stacked stone veneer
- **Stone Type:** Natural stone or manufactured stone veneer
- **Color Range:** Mixed neutral tones (gray / tan / cream)
- **Location:** Base of porch columns, Porch knee wall / wainscot below railing height

# **Appendix E: Proposed Siding**

## A. Siding Overview

The homeowner respectfully requests approval to remove and replace the deteriorated horizontal wood siding with smooth fiber-cement horizontal lap siding (Hardie or equivalent), installed to match the existing exposure, reveal (approximately 4-3/4"), and profile of the existing wood siding. Installation will also include a continuous weather-resistant barrier over exterior sheathing.

The proposed siding replacement is a like-for-like visual replacement that enhances durability, weather protection, and fire safety while maintaining the historic character of this contributing Almond Grove property. The request balances preservation with responsible stewardship and aligns with established precedent for similar historic homes in Los Gatos. For reasons detailed below, the request to replace the existing siding should be granted because:

- All evidence indicates that the **existing siding is not original to the home.**
- The **existing siding is deteriorating and not salvageable.**
- The **proposed fiber-cement siding will closely replicate the appearance of the existing painted wood siding** such that the change would not be readily perceptible to a lay observer.
- Preserving the home for the long term **requires properly waterproofing the exterior.** Since all siding must be removed to do this, it does not make sense to put the old siding back up.
- Cement fiber board is a **non-combustible material that helps with fire resistance.** This is particularly important for this property which is located in a Moderate Fire Severity Area.
- **A similar allowance was made for 155 Hernandez Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95030** through the Historic Preservation Committee Staff Report, dated October 22, 2025.

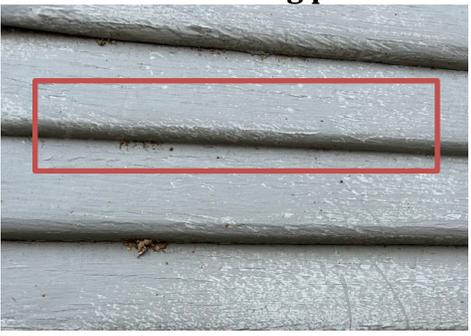
## B. Existing Siding is not Original to the Home

Although the residence dates to the 1920s, multiple lines of physical evidence indicate that the existing siding on the house is a later replacement rather than the original 1920s fabric.

This is because **the property presents two distinct exterior cladding conditions that differ materially in profile, construction, and weather-management strategy.** As summarized in the following table, while the residence features siding likely fabricated after 1941, the garage features siding likely fabricated before 1941.

	<b>Residence Siding</b>	<b>Garage Siding</b>
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<p><b>Siding Style</b></p>		
<p><b>Siding Condition</b></p>	<p>Both the siding on the residence and the garage are very deteriorated. However, the condition of the siding for the residence is overall better than that of the garage, suggesting it is newer than the siding used for the garage.</p>	
<p><b>Siding Size, Thickness and Appearance</b></p>	<p>The residence is clad in a <b>thin redwood 5.25-inch (lap) siding</b> installed over a black paper weather-resistant. The residence siding is <b>uniformly milled and completely smooth bevel siding, reflecting a later fabrication and installation period.</b> Related to this, the relatively thin profile of the house boards as compared to the thicker garage boards also reflects later lumber-efficiency practices associated with the declining availability of old-growth redwood after the 1930s, rather than typical early-1920s construction.</p>	<p>The garage is clad in a <b>thick-profile 3" wide beveled lap siding</b> typical of early 20th-century construction. The boards have a substantially narrower exposure and heavier butt edge than the siding on the residence. The garage clapboards <b>exhibit subtle irregularities, rough-sawn or lightly planed surfaces</b> indicating that it predates the primary home siding.</p>
<p><b>Milling Details</b></p>	<p>Examination of the residence's siding indicates that the boards were <b>cut using a circular saw and subsequently finish-</b></p>	<p>Consistent with the early 1920s clapboard siding, the garage siding <b>exhibits greater variation in thickness and profile, reflecting</b></p>

	<p>milled on a planer or siding molder to produce the smooth, uniform bevel profile. While circular saws were in use by the early 20th century, the high degree of dimensional consistency and refined taper evident here is characteristic of later industrial planing and molding processes that became widespread after World War II.</p> 	<p>more localized or less standardized milling practices.</p> 
<p><b>Siding of the Neighboring Homes</b></p>	<p>The siding used for 150 Tait does not match any other homes in the nearby vicinity, most of which have siding that is far narrower or wider than that of the residence at 150 Tait. Where the siding of these nearby properties is of similar width to the residence at 150 Tait, they have been installed as tongue-and-groove or batten board, and NOT lap siding. In fact, while the neighboring homes share common siding styles with one another, none of them share a style that is similar</p>	<p>The garage siding is consistent with the neighborhood's historic siding character, including the siding used for the properties immediately to the back of and right of 150 Tait.</p> <p>1) <u>255 Nicholson</u>: This house, which is directly behind 150 Tait, has the same type of siding as the garage, not the residence siding.</p>

	<p>to the siding used for the residence at 150 Tait.</p>	 <p>2) <u>146 Tait</u>: The house directly to the right of 150 Tait (which also predates 150 Tait on the Sanborn maps), has the same type of siding as 150 Tait's garage siding, not the residence siding.</p> 
<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Bedroom Addition</b></p>	<p>As discussed under Section I, the 1941 Assessor's Survey suggests that the 3<sup>rd</sup> bedroom located in the back of the house was added after 1941. <b>Although the 3<sup>rd</sup> bedroom was clearly added after 1941, its exterior siding seamlessly extends from the rest of the right elevation wall. Further, it is identical in age, installation and type as the rest of the home suggesting that the entire home was re-sided either when the 3<sup>rd</sup> bedroom was added or thereafter.</b></p>	

Taken together, these differences in siding profile, fabrication, installation method, and contextual compatibility indicate that the primary residence was re-sided after the original period of construction, while the garage retains an earlier siding type more consistent with original-era materials and established neighborhood historic patterns.

### **C. Existing Siding is Deteriorating (images available at the end of this Appendix)**

The home is characterized by horizontal wood lap siding consistent with early 20th-century Craftsman-era cottages common throughout Almond Grove and other Los Gatos historic districts. Existing exterior cladding consists of horizontal wood lap siding with an estimated exposure of approximately 5 inches. The siding exhibits extensive age-related deterioration, including dry rot, cupping, splitting, and joint failure. Evidence of deterioration includes:

- Multiple areas exhibit deep dry rot, indicating long-term water exposure.
- Portions of the siding show fungal decay and structural breakdown.
- Several boards crumble when probed, demonstrating loss of structural integrity.
- Dry rot has affected not only the siding but also isolated trim boards, suggesting systemic deterioration.

Based on the above reasons, continued patch repair is no longer practical and risks incremental loss of historic fabric. Images of the existing siding condition can be found at the end of this Appendix E.

### **D. Historic Compatibility and Like for Like Equivalency.**

The proposed fiber-cement siding will closely replicate the appearance of the existing painted wood siding such that the change would not be readily perceptible to a lay observer. The proposed installation will match the existing lap profile, reveal, shadow lines, scale, and finish, preserving the historic visual character of the building.

Consistent with the City's Residential Design Guidelines (Section 4.8.2), composite materials may be approved on a case-by-case basis where the replacement is visually compatible with the original material and maintains the character of the historic resource. The proposed smooth fiber-cement siding meets this standard by replicating the appearance of traditional painted wood while avoiding contemporary textures or profiles. The California Historic Building Code similarly encourages preservation while allowing reasonable equivalent materials that improve building safety and performance without diminishing historic character. The proposed use of a concealed weather-resistant barrier in combination with a non-combustible exterior cladding is consistent with these provisions and represents an appropriate equivalent solution.

In sum, while the material composition is changing, the replacement is visually equivalent in type, scale, proportion, and finish. Material samples and side-by-side comparisons of existing wood siding, new wood siding, and fiber-cement siding will be provided to demonstrate this equivalency.



### **E. Weather Resistance and Building Performance**

Preserving the home for the long term requires properly waterproofing the exterior. To properly weatherproof the structure, a modern weather-resistant barrier (house wrap) must be installed in compliance with current building codes and accepted construction practices. Current code requirements (CRC §703.1.1) require a continuous weather-resistant barrier behind exterior wall coverings. Installation of this barrier cannot be accomplished without full removal of the existing siding. During removal, the existing wood siding has been found to be fragile, dry-rotted in areas, and prone to splitting, making salvage and reinstallation impractical and unreliable. Attempting to reuse piecemeal sections would compromise both weather protection and visual consistency. Using a single, continuous siding material ensures:

- Improved water resistance
- Cleaner, more cohesive appearance
- Elimination of patchwork repairs and visible inconsistencies
- Better long-term protection of the underlying historic structure

In sum, the proposed fiber-cement siding resists rot, insects, and moisture intrusion, reducing repetitive repairs and supporting long-term preservation of the structure.

### **F. Fire Safety and Wildfire Resilience**

Fiber-cement siding is non-combustible and improves ignition resistance, aligning with California fire-hardening objectives while maintaining historic character. 150 Tait is located within the Moderate Fire Severity Area and therefore must follow Wildland Urban Interface guidelines and requirements for defensible spaces and home hardening. One option for compliance with these requirements is installation of non-combustible siding, such as Hardie board material. Fiber-cement siding is non-combustible and CAL FIRE compliant, providing significantly improved ignition

resistance compared to traditional wood siding. Additionally, replacing deteriorated wood siding with a non-combustible material materially improves life-safety while preserving historic appearance is an outcome explicitly supported by the California Historic Building Code.

#### **G. Los Gatos Historic District Precedent**

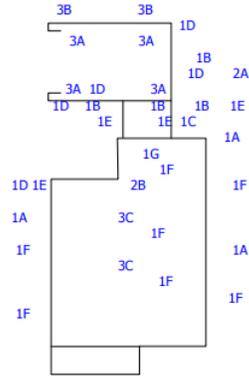
For 155 Hernandez Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95030, the Historic Preservation Committee Staff Report dated October 22, 2025 reviewed exterior modifications including siding replacement. Staff supported the use of smooth fiber-cement siding installed horizontally and matching the existing siding profile, exposure, and detailing, emphasizing visual compatibility and long-term durability. Official Staff Report:

<https://meetings.municode.com/adaHtmlDocument/index?cc=LOSGATOS&ip=True&me=58edac8fbc9040c9a46e748480f3322d>

# Images of Existing Siding

Docusign Envelope ID: 57F3BD17-7899-4778-BBB0-526532F6A59

Building No.	Street	City	ZIP	Date of Inspection	Number of Pages
150	Tait Avenue	Los Gatos	95030	6/24/2025	Page 2 of 10



**FRONT**  
Diagram Not To Scale















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