

HPC COMMENT RESPONSE



TOWN OF LOS GATOS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
PLANNING DIVISION
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CIVIC CENTER
110 E. MAIN STREET
LOS GATOS, CA 95030

September 23, 2026

Tom Krulevitch, Krulevitch Architecture, P.C.
48 Fairview Plaza
Los Gatos, CA 95030
Via email

RE: 54 Whitney Avenue
Request for Review Application PHST-26-020

Consider a Request for Preliminary Review to Construct Additions and Exterior Alterations to an Existing Pre-1941 Single-Family Residence on Property Zoned R-1:8. Located at 54 Whitney Avenue. APN 532-29-062. Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301: Existing Facilities. Property Owner: Robin Tijssen. Applicant: Tom Krulevitch, Krulevitch Architecture. Project Planner: Erin Walters.

On September 23, 2026, the Los Gatos Historic Preservation Committee discussed the item and provided the following feedback:

- Provide additional elevation diagrams and perspectives illustrating the proposed height, massing, and visibility from Stacia Street and from Whitney Avenue;
Site plan, elevs & perspectives as viewed from Whitney & Stacia clarified. A-3.1 & A-3.5
Consider reducing the overall height and mass of the addition, particularly as viewed from Stacia Street;
Structure articulation clarified, rear addition plate hgt reduced to 7'-0" & building height reduced to 27'-6" A-3.5. In addition, most of the houses in the neighborhood are 2 story with 4 having larger SF, 2 larger FAR and 3 taller. In addition to 2 having similar SF, 3 similar FAR and 2 similar height (see neighborhood analysis)
- Consider a tongue-and-groove material for the rear porch that is compatible with the Queen Anne Victorian architectural style;
Rear porch to incorporate tongue-and-groove flooring.
- Supportive of alternative material for the rear porch, such as Hardie board;
wood and composite materials are being considered for the rear porch flooring
- Provide siding on the addition that matches the existing wood siding;
Addition exterior horizontal siding to match existing wood siding, A-3.2

- Consider incorporating stained-glass treatment on the front elevation windows similar to the original front windows;
Perimeter stain-glass treatment similar to original front window will be incorporated, A-3.1
- Evaluate the right-side elevation and consider incorporating additional windows;
Additional family room windows on the right side were carefully considered. There is already plenty of light in this space from the stair well, 2 sets of rear doors and 2 windows on the Stacia side wall. In addition, the neighbor fence and garage block this area from view. For these reasons, no additional windows were added.
- Support was provided for French doors at the rear, and others preferred the proposed folding doors and associated detailing;
Folding doors with the associated trim and mullion detailing remain
- Support was provided for the modern transition element, and others preferred a traditional transition; *The transition is 'indented' on both sides of the house and is set back 8' from the neighbor side and 44' from the Stacia side*
- Consider more traditional window design at the transition feature;
Windows revised to reflect a more traditional double hung two story design. A-3.4
- Provide additional examples of similar modern transitions between historic residences and additions;
See page 3 for NPC guidelines and 2 examples. See page 4 for a rendering of 54 Whitney
- Consider a Victorian Queen Anne color scheme for the house color; and
A traditional Victorian Queen Anne house color scheme will be considered
- Consider that trees may have to be removed on the property due to current Fire regulations.
It is unlikely the large redwoods, cedars and pines along Stacia will be removed due to fire regulations. The property is in the nonwildland fire severity zone (lowest rating and same as downtown San Jose). The trees were evaluated as 'good' and 'fair' by Bo Firestone, certified arborist, which is defined as normal and reduced vigor. The arborist noted that none of these larger trees need to be removed

The project will return to the Historic Preservation Committee for further preliminary review.

If you have any questions, I can be contacted by phone at (408) 354-6867 or by email at ewalters@losgatosca.gov.

Sincerely,



Erin Walters,
Senior Planner

Differentiating the new addition from the historic building, National Park Service Guidelines

To preserve a property's historic character, a new addition must be visually distinguishable from the historic building. Section 67.7(c) of the program regulations cautions "exterior additions that duplicate the form, material, and detailing of the structure to the extent that they compromise the historic character of the structure will result in denial of certification." This does not mean that the addition and historic building should be glaringly different in terms of design, materials and other visual qualities. Instead, the new addition should take its design cues from, but not copy, the historic building.

Differentiating the new from the old, yet still respecting the architectural qualities and vocabulary of the old, can be accomplished through a variety of design techniques, including:

Incorporating a simple, recessed, small-scale hyphen to physically separate the old and the new volumes or setting the addition back from the wall plane(s) of the historic building.
Avoiding any approaches that unify the two volumes into a single architectural whole...

Preservation Brief 14, New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns. National Park Service

A new addition also has the potential to confuse the public and to make it difficult or impossible to differentiate the old from the new or to recognize what part of the historic building is genuinely historic. Pg. 2

Rather than differentiating between old and new, it might seem more in keeping with the historic character simply to repeat the historic form, material, features and detailing in a new addition. However, when the new work is highly replicative and indistinguishable from the old in appearance, it may no longer be possible to identify the "real" historic building. Pg 3&4

A new addition should be simple and unobtrusive in design, and should be distinguished from the historic building - a recessed connector can help to differentiate the new from the old. Pg 7.



Figure 1. The addition to the right with its connecting hyphen is compatible with the Collegiate Gothic-style library. The addition is set back from the front of the library and uses the same materials and a simplified design that references, but does not copy, the historic building. Photo: David Wakely Photography.



Preservation Brief 14, example

Residential example, found online



54 Whitney proposed, as viewed from neighbor's driveway