

September 18th, 2025

Re-Siding

155 Hernandez Avenue, Los Gatos CA

Project Overview

We received the Historic Preservation Committee's approval earlier this year for replacing and moving a few windows and raising the roof of this lovely home built in 1917. We very much appreciate your approval.

We return to your committee to request the replacement of all remaining existing horizontal wood siding with new horizontal hardi-board siding. The exposure and profile will be exactly the same (4-3/4"). The front of the porch and lower few feet along the west elevation wall has shingle siding that will remain untouched.

The homeowner, the design professionals, and the contractor for this project see ourselves as stewards of this historic home. To ensure that this home lasts another 100 + years, we would like to make the house both more water tight and more fire resistant.

Weather Resistance:

To make the house more weather resistant we will need to install a weather-resistant barrier (house wrap). Current codes (CRC 703.1.1) and common building practices require a weather-resistant barrier to be installed on the exterior of the studs and sheathing and below the siding. The only way to do this would be to remove all of the existing wood siding.

The existing wood horizontal siding has done a great job of protecting this home for over 100 years. While this siding is still in ok shape, as the builders remove it to install the new windows they are finding that it splits easily and will be difficult to re-install. Due to its fragility and the many layers of old paint, marrying it and blending it with new wood siding will be extremely difficult. For a more visually cohesive and water-tight finished product we suggest using a uniform material, with continuous lengths (rather than cobbling the shorter runs from the salvaged existing siding). We understand that per the City's Residential Design Guidelines 4.8.2

Composite ... wood products, ... 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

Be assured that the new siding will be consistent with the appearance of the original materials and a lay person would be unlikely to discern the difference. See attached photo with a visual comparison of Hardi-Board, existing wood siding and new wood siding.

House Hardening for Fire:

For fire resistance we are following the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) guidelines that are required in this neighborhood had the house been newly built. One of the important aspects to comply with WUI standards is to install exterior wall coverings per R337.7.3. Among several options is to install non-combustible siding. Hardi-board siding is non-combustible and is certified by Cal Fire.

Conclusion:

The California Historic Preservation Code encourages preservation but does not authorize the prevention of improving the safety of the building. Reasonable equivalency allows for the installation of a concealed weather-resistant barrier and the installation of an ignition resistant or non-combustible product that maintains the visible historic preservation.

Thus, please kindly consider our request to replace the remaining existing wood horizontal siding with non-combustible Hardi Board siding.

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