



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
REPORT

MEETING DATE: 11/19/25

ITEM NO: 7

DATE: November 14, 2025
TO: Historic Preservation Committee
FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Consider a Request for Approval to Construct an Addition and Exterior Alterations to an Existing Pre-1941 Single-Family Residence on Property Zoned R-1D. **Located at 446 San Benito Avenue.** APN 410-16-051. Request for Review Application PHST-25-021. Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301: Existing Facilities. Property Owner/Applicant: Devendra Deshwal. Project Planner: Maria Chavarin.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider a request for approval to construct an addition and exterior alterations to an existing pre-1941 single-family residence located at 446 San Benito Avenue.

PROPERTY DETAILS:

1. Date primary structure was built: 1905 per County Assessor's Database; 1920s per Anne Bloomfield Survey
2. Town of Los Gatos Historic Status Code: "✓" or historic and some altered
3. Does property have an LHP Overlay? No
4. Is structure in a historic district? No
5. If yes, is it a contributor? N/A
6. Findings required? Yes
7. Considerations required? Yes

BACKGROUND:

The County Assessor indicates that the residence located at 446 San Benito Avenue was constructed in 1905 and the 1991 Bloomfield Survey estimates the construction date as the 1920s (Attachment 1). The building footprint shown on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps is consistent between 1928 and 1944 (Attachment 1). The footprint of the residence remained consistent between 1928 and 1944.

PREPARED BY: Maria Chavarin
Assistant Planner

The 1991 Anne Bloomfield Survey rates the residence as historic and some altered (Attachment 1). This rating suggests that, at the time of the survey in 1991, very few modifications had been made to the residence including window and porch alterations. Town permit records provide the following permit history:

- 2004 – Electrical Permit;
- 2010 – Building Permit – front porch and roof eaves repairs; and
- 2015 – Building Permit – re-roof.

The applicant provided evidence that there have been unpermitted additions to the original structure (Attachment 1). Building permits show that the permitted floor area of the house is 684 square feet where the actual existing floor area of the house is 889 square feet. The applicant provided as-built plans for the existing house (Attachment 1, Annexure 10), showing the existing floor area of 889 square feet. The applicant's position is that unpermitted additions were made to the house.

In addition to the applicant's research on the history of the property (Attachment 1), the applicant proposes to construct a 1,393-square foot first floor addition and a 479-square foot attached garage toward the side and rear of the residence and exterior modifications such as siding replacement (Attachment 3).

At the September 24, 2025, meeting, the Historic Preservation Committee deliberated on a preliminary review for a single-story addition and a new two-story addition including exterior alterations to a pre-1941 residence. The Committee discussed each of the areas of interest outlined in the staff report dated September 19, 2025. The Committee evaluated the proposal and provided feedback to the applicant to apply the recommendations to a future design.

DISCUSSION:

The applicant has returned to the Committee requesting a formal recommendation of the revised project, proposing a single-story addition with exterior alterations including siding replacement (Attachments 2 and 4). The applicant's project description (Attachment 2) describes the existing structures on site, details the proposed single-story addition, and addresses the areas of interest provided in the staff report dated September 19, 2025.

The development plans show a single-story addition to the side and rear of the existing residence. The addition consists of a 479-square-foot attached garage, and a 1,393-square foot addition totaling 2,238-square foot residence. The proposed residence complies with the maximum allowed floor area allowed for the property. Based on the project scope and once the demolition calculation is verified, the project could be completed under a Building Permit application.

The design of the attached garage is setback from the front façade of the residence to minimize visual impact from the public street. The added habitable area is located to the rear of the existing residence and not visible from the street. The new roof forms on the front elevation appear to align with the original bungalow architectural style of the existing residence. The exterior changes consist of removing and replacing doors and windows including window types, introduction of new roof ridges to accommodate the new garage and new habitable areas, and siding replacement. The proposed windows would be white metal-clad wood; the new roof is a gable roof to match the existing roof style and materials (shingles); the proposed garage and entry doors consist of wood material; and the proposed siding is a shingle wood siding to match existing.

Town Code Section 29.10.020 clarifies that demolition of a historic structure means removal of more than twenty-five percent of the wall(s) facing a public street or fifty percent of all exterior walls. When approved by the deciding body, the following is exempt from the demolition 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.
- 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.

The applicant requests that the Committee make the repair finding, exempting the in-kind replacement of the damage siding from the demolition calculation.

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.

 X 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.

___ 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 any other pertinent factors. Applications shall not be granted unless:

X For pre-1941 structures, the proposed work will neither adversely affect the exterior architectural characteristics or other features of the property which is the subject of the application.

C. Residential Design Guidelines

Sections 3.9 of the Town's Residential Design Guidelines offers recommendations for the construction of additions to existing residences (Attachment 3).

CONCLUSION:

The applicant is seeking a recommendation of approval from the Committee for the construction of a single-story addition and exterior alterations to an existing pre-1941 single-family residence on property zoned R-1D, located at 446 San Benito Avenue. A new single-story addition, if not triggering a technical demolition, would be processed through a Building Permit application. Should the Committee find merit in the request, the recommendation would be forwarded to the Community Development Director. If confirmed through Planning review to be in substantial conformance with the Committee's review and recommendations, the application would not return to the Committee.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Applicant's Research
2. Project Description
3. Section 3.9, Residential Design Guidelines
4. Development Plans