

LETTER OF JUSTIFICATION

Request to Remove Pre-1941 Property from the Historic Resources Inventory

Property Address 142 Wheeler Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95030	APN 532-37-034
Year Built Circa 1918–1920	Zoning R-1
Property Owner Wendy and Rodd Rowalt	Date Submitted March 2026

1. Purpose of This Request

The owner of 142 Wheeler Avenue requests that the Town of Los Gatos remove this property from the Historic Resources Inventory (HRI). This request is submitted pursuant to the Town’s established process allowing removal of pre-1941 structures that have no meaningful historical or architectural value.

As documented in the research findings below, this property does not meet the criteria for historic designation. It has no documented historical significance, no notable former residents, and has undergone extensive unpermitted modifications that have fundamentally compromised its original structure and character.

We have consulted an Architect, Los Gatos Planning department, and Los Gatos historical librarian to validate the findings below.

2. Architectural Evaluation

2a. Original Structure

The Anne Bloomfield Architectural/Cultural Survey confirms the property is a modest Bungalow-style residence estimated to date from the 1920s. The survey notes only minor alterations at the time of the survey (porch alterations, shingles) and does not indicate any Town of Los Gatos historic designation or recognition. No “Designation” or “Recognition” boxes are checked on the Bloomfield Survey form.

2b. Loss of Historic Integrity — Sanborn Map Comparison

A direct comparison of the 1928 and 1944 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps against the current floor plan reveals the property has been nearly doubled in size through a series of additions, the majority of which appear to be unpermitted and undocumented:

Measurement	1941 Tax Assessment (Original)	Current Floor Plan
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Main Living Area

~553 sq ft

1100+ sq ft

The original document can't be changed, so a duplicate with your changes has been created.

Form (27) BUILDING CLASSIFICATION

ADDRESS LOCATION 142 Wheeler ST. AVE. CITY OF LOS GATOS CALIFORNIA

BLOCK NUMBER 45 LOT NUMBER OWNERSHIP Donald G. Hobbs

SUBDIVISION OR TRACT, 90 ft on S. side of Wheeler Ave. by 150 ft. deep

DESCRIPTION Bldg. C by Land of Boyle, & W. by City of Los Gatos

Scale 1" = 50' HEIGHT..... FT.

Sect.	Dimensions	Area or Cubage	Unit Cost	Repro. Cost	Cur. bldgs	Pres. Value
(A)	X X =	553 sq. ft.	\$ 3.95	\$ 2184.		\$
(B)	X 6 X 6 =	36 cu. ft.	\$ 1.00	36.		
(C)	X X =				Miscel.	
(D)	X X =				Retain. Wall	
	X X =				Tank	
	X X =				Pool	
Reproduction Cost of Main Building				\$ 2220.	53% Good	\$ 1175.
Garage	X 13 X 17 =	221 sq. ft.	-.90	199.	50% Good	\$ 100.
Depreciation	%	Pct. Good	%	TOTAL DEPRECIATED VALUE		\$ 127.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

COMMERCIAL BLDGS. CONSTRUCTION

RENOV. BUILDINGS

CONSTRUCTION

OUTBUILDINGS

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

FLOORING

MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT - Pres. Val.

OUTBUILDINGS-VALUE Under \$400

Miscellaneous Remarks

See Reverse

STREET FRONT

PRICED BY W.W. Holdaway 1/7/46

CLASSIFICATION 1204 A B C

QUALITY: Cheap...; Medium...; Good...; Special...

OCCUPANCY Owner Tenant Vacant Not Home

Age 25 Yrs. Remodeled Age Yrs.

Condition: New Good Medium Poor

Obsolescence Yes No Functional Defects...

Special Depreciation For: Lack of Utility.....

Over...; Under...; Improvement; Location.....

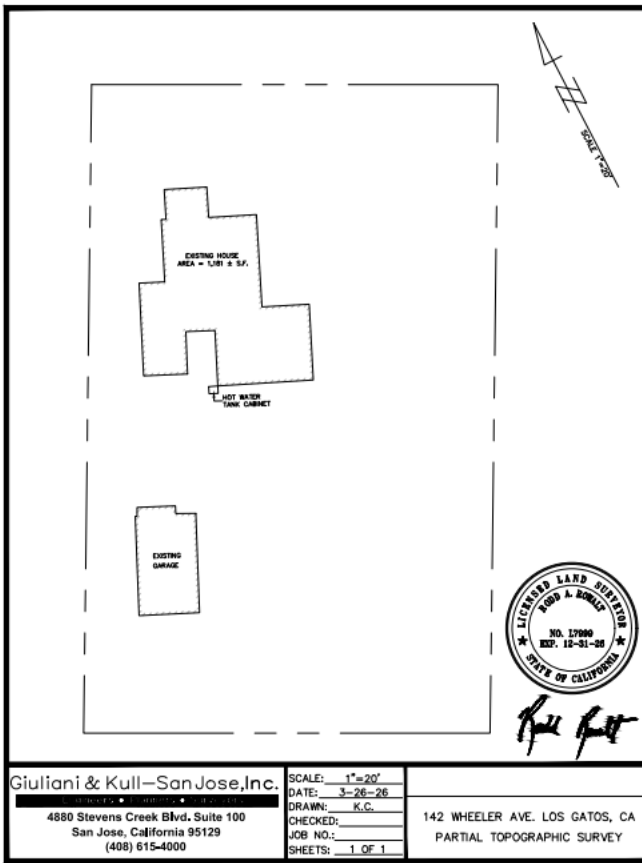
DESIGN: Good...; Acceptable...; Poor...; Frank...

FLOOR PLAN: Good...; Acceptable...; Awkward.....

Perimeter of Walls 102 Ft.; Number of angles.....

RENT \$ Per Source of Information No. Tenant Agent Estimated

March 2026



THE BULK STAMP



CROSS INTERNAL AREA
 MAIN FLOOR: 1042 SQ FT, 97 m²; EXCLUDED AREA: PATIO, 96 SQ FT, 9 m²; SHED: 396 SQ FT, 37 m²
 TOTAL: 1042 SQ FT, 97 m²
 (SIZE AND DIMENSIONS ARE APPROXIMATE, ACTUAL MAY VARY)

2c. Specific Integrity-Compromising Alterations

The following modifications, discovered after purchase, are inconsistent with the original Bungalow character of the structure and are not reflected in any of the historic documentation:

- Unpermitted dining room addition with modern sliding glass doors, not present in 1928 or 1944 Sanborn maps; inconsistent with the original Bungalow style
- Roof replacement or modification departs from the original roofline documented in historic records
- New porch
- Unpermitted bathroom addition added without Town permits or documentation, altering the original floor plan
- Expanded kitchen, laundry room not reflected in the original property footprint



2d. Poor condition of the property

A professional home inspection conducted by HomeGuard Incorporated on January 8, 2026 (Report No. 669169) documented extensive deterioration throughout the property, consistent

with the unpermitted modifications and deferred maintenance described above. The inspector identified the following immediate concerns:

- Structural water damage: Wood members under the living room and kitchen both show evidence of water damage, requiring pest control investigation. Water damage was also observed to the rafters, fascia, and wood siding at multiple exterior walls, as well as to the garage wall framing.
- Roof at end of life cycle: The inspector noted the sloped roofing is “nearing or past the end of its life cycle” with a significant number of deteriorated and cracked shingles throughout. Disconnected, cracked, and damaged roof supports and joists were noted over the detached garage.
- Outdated and unsafe electrical systems: Knob and tube wiring was noted throughout the structure — an outdated system associated with the original era of construction. Additional issues include exposed wiring in the garage below 7 feet, reversed polarity outlets in the kitchen, abandoned wiring in the crawlspace, loose and unsecured junction boxes, and a fuse panel flagged as a potential safety hazard requiring replacement.
- Substandard plumbing: Copper piping is connected directly to galvanized piping (an unapproved configuration that accelerates deterioration), an open drain pipe in the crawlspace was flagged as a health hazard, and the water heater vent flue is improperly configured. Multiple leaking faucets were documented throughout.
- Vermin activity and potential hazardous materials: Evidence of vermin activity was documented inside the structure. Given the 1918 construction date, the inspector also flagged the likelihood of asbestos-containing materials in ceiling texture, pipe insulation, and siding — materials that would require specialist engagement for any renovation work.

3. Historical Significance Research

A thorough research process was completed through the Los Gatos Public Library in accordance with the Historic Preservation Committee’s recommended guidelines. The results of that research are summarized below:

Research Source	Document	Result
LGMA Historic Homes Tours	Tour Records	Not Found / Not Applicable
Historic Property Research Collection	Archive Files	Not Found / Not Applicable
Historic Directories (self-directed research)	City Directories	Not Found / Not Applicable
Notable / Famous Former Residents	Directory Research	Not Found / Not Applicable
Anne Bloomfield Architectural Survey	Survey Form	Not Found / Not Applicable
National Register Listed Date	Federal Records	Not Found / Not Applicable

Town of Los Gatos Designation or Recognition	Bloomfield Survey	Not Found / Not Applicable
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The 1941 Tax Assessment further characterizes the property as “Cheap to Medium” quality construction, consistent with the absence of any special architectural merit warranting historic preservation.

3a. Response to Anne Bloomfield Survey Rating

The Town’s response noted that the 1990 Anne Bloomfield Survey assigned a preliminary rating of “historic and some altered but still contributor to district if there is one.” Two important points address this rating:

1. The rating is conditional and inapplicable. The Bloomfield Survey rating explicitly states “contributor to district if there is one.” 142 Wheeler Avenue is not located within any designated historic district. The conditional basis of the rating therefore does not apply to this property.

2. The rating predates the unpermitted additions. The Bloomfield Survey was conducted in 1990 — more than 35 years ago. The significant unpermitted additions documented in this letter (dining room, bathroom, expanded kitchen, and roof modifications) occurred after that survey date, meaning the surveyor’s assessment was based on a structure in a substantially different condition than exists today. The current property no longer reflects what was evaluated in 1990.

3b. Building Permit History

A search of the Town of Los Gatos’ online building permit records (permits.losgatosca.gov) for APN 532-37-034 returned no permits for the additions and modifications identified in this letter. Specifically, no permits were found for:

- The dining room addition with sliding glass doors
- The bathroom addition
- The expanded kitchen and laundry room
- The roof replacement or modification
- Additional structures including the expanded shed

The complete absence of permit records confirms that these modifications were made without Town oversight, further demonstrating the loss of historic integrity and the inability of the current structure to convey its original character.

3c. Response to HPC Required Findings

The Town’s process requires justification for at least one of five findings. This application satisfies all five:

Finding 1 — Not associated with significant events: Research through the Los Gatos Public Library, Historic Property Research Collection, LGMA Historic Homes Tours, and historic directories found no events of significance to the Town associated with this property.

Finding 2 — No significant persons associated: Historic directory research identified no notable or historically significant former residents or owners of 142 Wheeler Avenue.

Finding 3 — No distinctive characteristics of type, period, or method of construction: The 1941 Tax Assessment rated the original structure as “Cheap to Medium” quality. The Anne Bloomfield Survey identified only a basic Bungalow style with no distinguished craftsmanship or master architect association. The structure does not represent exceptional or distinctive construction methods of its era.

Finding 4 — Does not yield information to Town history: No file exists in the Historic Property Research Collection. The property does not appear in any historic tours, guides, or archival records that would indicate it contributes meaningful information to the history of Los Gatos.

Finding 5 — Integrity compromised such that the structure can no longer convey significance: The property has been nearly doubled in size through unpermitted additions — none of which appear in the Town’s building permit records. The Sanborn map comparison, floor plan analysis, home inspection findings, and integrity assessment in Section 4 all confirm that the structure has fundamentally lost its original Bungalow character and can no longer convey historic significance.

4. Analysis of Historic Integrity

The U.S. Department of the Interior defines seven aspects of integrity that must be evaluated when assessing whether a property retains its historic character. The Los Gatos Historic Preservation Committee applies these same criteria when considering removal requests. An assessment of 142 Wheeler Avenue against all seven aspects is provided below.

Aspect	Status	Analysis for 142 Wheeler Ave
Design	COMPROMISED	The original Bungalow design has been significantly altered. The addition of a modern living room with sliding glass doors, roof modifications, and an unpermitted bathroom fundamentally changed the design character of the structure.
Setting	COMPROMISED	Expanded footprint substantially alters the original relationship of the building to its site, as clearly evidenced by comparison of the Sanborn maps to the current floor plan.
Materials	COMPROMISED	Original roofing material has been replaced. The Anne Bloomfield Survey noted shingles as an alteration. Modern sliding glass doors replace original window and door materials inconsistent with Bungalow-era construction.
Workmanship	COMPROMISED	The unpermitted additions were completed without Town oversight or documentation, meaning no

		record exists that original-era craftsmanship or techniques were preserved or replicated in these modifications.
Feeling	COMPROMISED	A property’s “feeling” reflects its overall sense of historic time and place. The combination of modern additions, altered roofline, sliding doors, and nearly doubled footprint means the property no longer conveys the feeling of an early-20th-century Bungalow.
Association	NOT ESTABLISHED	No association with notable persons, events, or historical patterns has been identified through any research source — including historic directories, tour records, the Historic Property Research Collection, or the Anne Bloomfield Survey.
Location	INTACT	The physical location of the structure has not changed; the building has not been moved from its original site. However, location alone cannot compensate for the extensive loss of integrity across all other applicable aspects.

Of the seven aspects of integrity have been evaluated. Six are either compromised or not established, with only Location remaining intact. either compromised or not established. This analysis strongly supports the conclusion that 142 Wheeler Avenue has lost the historic integrity required for continued inclusion in the Historic Resources Inventory.

5. Precedent: Comparable De-listing Cases

The Los Gatos Historic Preservation Committee has approved similar removal requests in recent years where properties demonstrated a comparable loss of historic integrity through alterations and additions. Examples from Committee agendas include:

- 1 Orchard Street (PHST-25-006, April 2025) — Removal approved based on loss of integrity and lack of historic significance
- 446 San Benito Avenue (PHST-25-005, April 2025) — Removal request citing integrity loss from modifications
- 24 Pleasant Street (PHST-25-013, August 2025) — Removal based on Sanborn map comparison and Bloomfield Survey findings
- 15116 Blossom Hill Road (PHST-24-011/012, 2024) — Removal approved for HR-1 zoned property
- 37 Ellenwood Avenue (PHST-25-008, May 2025) — Removal of R-1:8 pre-1941 property
- **136 Wheeler Avenue, next door (December 2020) — Removal of R-1:10 pre-1941 property based on loss of integrity from prior alterations and poor condition of the residence**

In each of these cases, the applicant submitted a Letter of Justification, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map comparisons, and the Anne Bloomfield Survey, the same documentation we are providing here.

6. Supporting Documents Attached

- Attachment 1 — Anne Bloomfield Architectural/Cultural Survey
- Attachment 2 — 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Los Gatos, Sheet 27)
- Attachment 3 — 1944 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Los Gatos, Sheet 27)
- Attachment 4 — 1941 Tax Assessment Survey
- Attachment 5 — Current Floor Plan (showing sq ft comparison) and Survey

7. Conclusion

Based on the evidence presented in this letter and the attached documentation, 142 Wheeler Avenue does not meet the criteria for continued inclusion in the Town of Los Gatos Historic Resources Inventory. Specifically:

- No historical significance: No notable former residents, no appearance in historic tours or guides, and no documentation of historically important events associated with the property
- No architectural merit: The original structure was a modest Bungalow of “Cheap to Medium” quality with no distinctive architectural features
- Loss of physical integrity: The property has been nearly doubled in size through unpermitted additions, including a modern dining room addition with sliding doors, a roof replacement, and an unpermitted bathroom, all of which were unknown to the current owner at time of purchase

The owner respectfully requests that the Historic Preservation Committee approve the removal of 142 Wheeler Avenue from the Historic Resources Inventory.

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