



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
COMMITTEE REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 04/22/2026

ITEM NO: 3

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DATE: April 17, 2026  
TO: Historic Preservation Committee  
FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director  
SUBJECT: Consider a Request for Approval to Construct Exterior Alterations to a Contributing Building in the Downtown Historic Commercial District on Property Zoned C-2:LHP. **Located at 91 W. Main Street.** APN 529-01-025. Request for Review Application PHST-26-005. Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301: Existing Facilities. Property Owner: Sue Farwell, Vermont Building LLC. Applicant: Gary Kohlsaas. Project Planner: Sean Mullin.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider a request for approval to construct exterior alterations to a contributing building in the Downtown Historic Commercial District on property zoned C-2:LHP, located at 91 W. Main Street.

PROPERTY DETAILS:

1. Date primary structure was built: 1908 per County Assessor's Database
2. Bloomfield Preliminary Rating: R, historic but grossly altered; remodeled heavily; appears built before 1942
3. Does the property have an LHP Overlay? Yes
4. Is the structure in a historic district? Yes, Downtown Historic Commercial District
5. If yes, is it a contributor? Yes
6. Findings required? No
7. Considerations required? Yes

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is located on the south side of W. Main Street, at the intersection of W. Main Street and University Avenue. The County Assessor reports that the building was constructed in 1908. The Anne Bloomfield Survey rates the residence as R, historic but grossly altered with an estimated age of the building as the 1950's to 1960's (Attachment 1 of Attachment 1). The Bloomfield Survey also notes under "Alterations" that there is nothing left of the façade, indicating that the façade has been rebuilt and heavily modified from the original form.

PREPARED BY: Sean Mullin, AICP  
Planning Manager

The Los Gatos Historic Resources Inventory – Evaluation Sheet notes the architecture as “Googie,” with diagonal fronts and ledge rock, reflective of the prevalence of mid-century car culture (Attachment 1 of Attachment 1). The evaluation notes that this style is rare in the Town and that the design is “good of its sort but not historic.” The “Alterations” section of the evaluation sheet further notes that the façades present in 1947 had already been altered (1 covered parapet, 3 lost pipe rails, planters plastered in), rating the structure as a noncontributor to the district and that the structure appears ineligible for designation.

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1888 through 1908 show an evolving location of structures on the subject property. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map begins to display a consistent footprint of the structure between 1928 and 1956 (Attachment 2 of Attachment 1).

On February 25, 2026, the Los Gatos Historic Preservation Committee discussed the item and provided the following feedback:

- Generally, not supportive of the modifications to the building footprint; and
- Not supportive of the proposed sliding windows.

#### DISCUSSION:

In response to the Committee’s feedback, the applicant conducted additional research and provided an addendum to their original Letter of Justification (Attachment 2). Based on their research, the applicant asserts that the existing façade with the angled windows is not original, consistent with the Town’s records discussed above. The applicant provided photos of the original façade and indicates that a complete redesign of the façade occurred sometime before the winter of 1952. The three gables were removed, along with the decorative moldings. The façades were flattened off and the five storefronts were remodeled into the current configuration of angled displays and doors set back and to the side. This is reflected in the photos provided by the applicant.

Considering the information indicating that the existing façade is not original and was modified sometime between 1950 and 1952, the applicant continues to request approval of the façade modifications presented at the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting (Attachment 7 of Attachment 1). The applicant indicates that this alteration pays its respect to the historical roots of the building with the same wood windows, bench, and stone seat wall (Attachment 2). The subtle difference in the orientation of the wall makes a significant difference to the tenants, customers and ultimately the entire Town of Los Gatos.

CONSIDERATIONS:

A. 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   In historic districts, the proposed work will neither adversely affect the exterior architectural characteristics or other features of the property which is the subject of the application, nor adversely affect its relationship, in terms of harmony and appropriateness, with its surroundings, including neighboring structures, not adversely affect the character, or the historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value of the district.

B. Residential Design Guidelines

Sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.8.1, and 4.8.4 of the Town's Residential Design Guidelines define protected exterior elements, clarify restoration/rehabilitation/reconstruction, provide general guidelines for a historic resource, and provide recommendations for windows and glass in doors in Historic Districts and/or on historic properties (Attachment 6 of Attachment 1).

CONCLUSION:

The applicant is requesting a recommendation for approval from the Committee on a proposal to construct exterior alterations to a contributing building in the Downtown Historic Commercial District on property zoned C-2:LHP, located at 91 W. Main Street. The proposed exterior alterations, if not triggering a technical demolition, will be processed as a Building Permit.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Historic Preservation Committee Staff Report with Attachments, February 25, 2026
2. Addendum to Letter of Justification

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