

Los Gatos Planning and Historic Preservation Committee,

This letter is intended to explain the proposed changes at 54 Whitney Avenue and the historic background of the home. The existing home was built in approximately 1891^(a) in the Queen Anne Victorian Style^(b) with an ornate front box bay window (Image A). We are proposing no changes to the front portion of the building and a remodel / addition to the rear first and second stories, which will seamlessly blend into this beautiful residence.

The Tijssen family are the current owners and would like to add more space for their growing family. The proposed addition includes an expanded second story at the rear of the existing footprint, providing a second bedroom and a shared bathroom. Also included is a rear two story addition beyond the existing footprint that includes a family room to provide more room for two young children, a rear porch to enable outdoor living space and a proper primary bedroom to provide a retreat for themselves.

Distinguishing character of the existing home can be seen on the street facing facades. The front façade as seen from Whitney Ave (Image B) includes two gables with simple corbels (corner brackets), gable ornamentation, vergeboards (decorative gable / fascia trim) and horizontal wood siding. The original Bay Box window includes detailed layered woodwork with corner brackets, fretwork and circular soffit vents. Unfortunately, the original wrap around porch was enclosed with the original leaded parlor window replaced by an aluminum slider. The left façade as can be seen from Stacia St (Images C & D) includes a centered gable, horizontal wood siding with a small pierced balustrade fretwork detail under left side of gable eave (image E). Unfortunately, the original leaded window on this side has also been replaced by an aluminum slider. The complex roof includes an upper gable, jerkinhead clipped gable and lower wrap-around hip above the front enclosed porch.

Second Story Addition at Rear of Existing Footprint

There is currently a 137 SF upstairs storage room under the rear hip roof providing 6'-0" +/- head height. The proposal is modify the existing upstairs storage area to enable a 201 SF functional bedroom and bathroom with 8'-0" head height. The exterior accoutrements will be consistent with the Queen Anne style of the existing home including a gabled and jerkinhead roof structure with horizontal siding, trim, corbels, gable ornamentation, vergeboards, windows and roofing to match existing. The front of the existing home facing Whitney and the side of the existing home facing Stacia Street will not be disturbed. The addition is not visible from Whitney Ave and partially visible from Stacia St as can be seen in images F, G, H and I.

Rear Two Story Addition Beyond the Existing Footprint

The proposal is to add 782 SF behind the existing home, including a stairwell (partially within the existing footprint), family room, and upstairs primary bedroom. The exterior façade and roof forms will be consistent with the Queen Anne style of the existing home. A 314 SF 'L' shaped rear wrap around porch is also proposed. The original home had a wraparound front porch which was enclosed in the 1950s^(c) (Images A & B). The posts, post corner brackets and hipped roof of the proposed rear porch will be almost identical to the original front porch. Additionally, there is currently a rear facing shed dormer which is proposed for removal with the addition of the rear second story (Image J). The proposal is to replicate this dormer on the rear side of the new primary bedroom roof (Image K). The dormer will cover the bathtub bump out and primary bedroom 20 SF upper balcony.

The addition is not visible from Whitney Ave street view and is set on the interior of the lot to decrease visibility from Stacia Street. There are also a number of large, heavily foliated trees which further hamper the view from Stacia. Elevations and street views can be seen in images F, G, H and I.

Images and additional information on neighborhood outreach and historic research are captured below. Our goal is to propose modifications which are consistent with the historic character of this beautiful Queen Anne home. We hope the committee agrees and will support our proposal.

Thank you and Best,

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Images



Image A. 54 Oak Street (Name Later Changed To Whitney Avenue), CIRCA 1903



Image B. As Viewed From Whitney Avenue, Present Day



Image C & D As Viewed From Stacia Street, Present Day



Image E, Pierced Balustrade Fretwork, Present Day



Image F & G Proposed Elevation Drawing and Street Image as viewed from Whitney Avenue



Image H Proposed Elevation Drawing As Viewed From Stacia Street



Image I Proposed Street Image As Viewed From Stacia Street



Image J. Rear Facing Shed Dormer Proposed For Removal

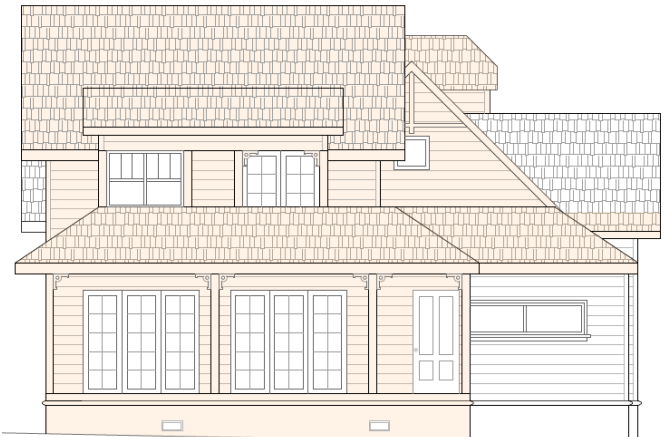


Image K. Proposed rear Elevation w/Shed Dormer

Neighbor Outreach

Owner to review addition / remodel design with immediate neighbors after receive HPC guidance and solidify plan

Historic Research

The property appears on 1891, 1928 and 1944 Sanborn maps (Images I, II and III). The primary home appears on each of these maps with a similar footprint to the present-day home (image IV) with the following additions / expansions.

1891

Built 5 rooms

1906

Chimney came down in earthquake and parlor fireplace removed

1891 – 1928

- Kitchen added with a side door leading to the outside
- Sunroom addition

1944 – Present Day.

It appears most / all of this work was done after the Bircmont's acquired the home in 1952

- wrap around front porch was incorporated into the living room. Original leaded front and side parlor windows replaced with aluminum sliders
- Metal roof storage room and part of rear porch incorporated into the house.
- rear right main bathroom expansion
- second interior bath added
- small storage room above rear bedroom

Home Footprint Images



Image I 1891 Sanborn Map

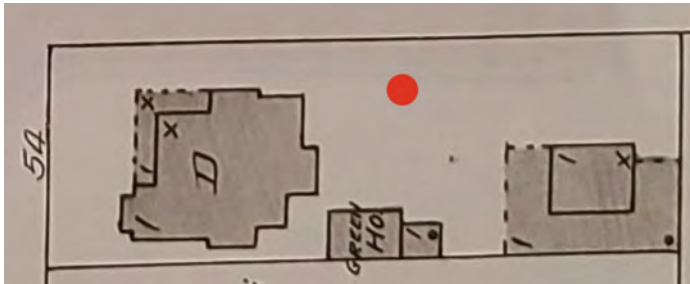


Image II 1928 Sanborn Map

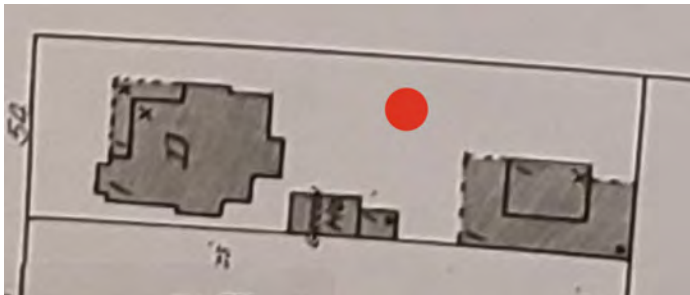


Image III 1944 Sanborn Map

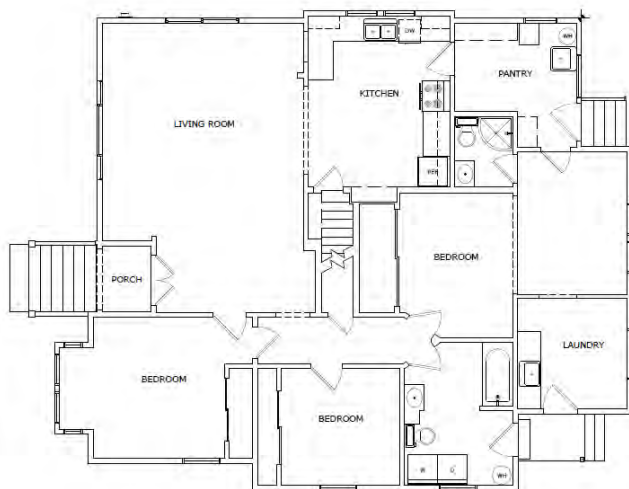


Image IV 2026 Present Day Home Footprint

1941 Tax Assessment Survey

Property is found in this survey. Information appears consistent with Sanborn Maps.

Anne Bloomfield Historic Resources Survey

Property is found in this survey.

Style noted as “Greek roof / Stickbay”

Alterations noted as “enclosed porch – barge bds may be new”

Los Gatos Museum Association / Historic Home Survey

Property found in this survey

Remodeling noted as “A bedroom was made out of the parlor room. A kitchen was added with a side door leading to the outside”

Previous Owners

Researched and no owner of historical significance found

- 1891 – 1902 George & Louis Emerson
- 1902 to 1907 William Snyder
- 1907 – 1952 Irving and Lulu Snyder
- 1952 – 2026 Mr. & Mrs. Francis Bricmonts
- 2026 – present Robin and Lynn Yeh

References

(a) 1891 Sanborn Map and Los Gatos Museum Association Historic Home Survey

(b) Late 19th Century home in Santa Clara, CA. A Field Guide to American Houses by Virginia & Lee McAlester, Knopf Inc, 1984, p269 #2

(c) History of 54 Whitney Avenue (Formerly 54 Oak Street), Los Gatos by Odette Bricmont James, May 2026, p3