



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
REPORT

MEETING DATE: 09/09/2026

ITEM NO: 1

DATE: September 4, 2026
TO: Historic Preservation Committee
FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Consider a Request for Approval to Construct Exterior Alterations to an Existing Pre-1941 Single-Family Residence on Property Zoned R-1:8. **Located at 69 Hernandez Avenue.** APN 510-41-015. Request for Review PHST-26-018. Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301: Existing Facilities. Property Owner: Phil Rolla. Applicant: Mike Tinsley. Project Planner: Suray Nathan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider a request for approval to construct exterior alterations to an existing pre-1941 single-family residence on property zoned R-1:8, located at 69 Hernandez Avenue.

PROPERTY DETAILS:

1. Date primary structure was built: 1900 per County Assessor; 1910 (estimated) per Bloomfield Survey
2. Bloomfield Preliminary Rating: ✓, historic & some altered, but still a contributor to the district if there is one
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? N/A
7. Considerations required? Yes

BACKGROUND:

The County Assessor indicates that the residence located at 69 Hernandez Ave was constructed in 1900, and the 1990 Bloomfield Survey estimates the construction date to be 1910 (Attachment 1). The residence appears on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map in 1908, and the residence's footprint remained consistent between 1928 and 1956 (Attachment 2).

PREPARED BY: Suray Nathan
Assistant Planner

On October 22, 2025, the Historic Preservation Committee recommended approval for exterior alterations (window replacement) to the Community Development Director with the condition that the applicant modify the proposed windows as shown on Attachment 6. The request was approved with that condition by the Community Development Director on October 27, 2025.

DISCUSSION:

The applicant is requesting approval to replace non-original wood shingles with Hardie board shingles; relocate the front door to face the street; and remove the rear porch and railing and replace it with a stone patio.

Shingle Replacement

The applicant requests approval to replace 480.7 square feet (17 percent of the total façade surface) of non-original wood siding with composite Hardie board shingles. Town records confirm that this siding was installed as part of a second-story addition constructed on the subject residence in 1981 and is currently in poor condition due to deferred maintenance (Attachments 3, 5, and 6). Following a site inspection, the Community Development Director determined that the siding has deteriorated beyond reasonable repair, fails to meet acceptable construction standards, and requires full replacement.

Pursuant to Town Code Section 29.10.020, replacement of exterior siding must be executed in-kind to maintain the structure's existing architectural appearance and historic character. However, the applicant proposes installing composite Hardie board shingles instead of in-kind materials. As detailed in the Letter of Justification, the applicant asserts this material substitution is warranted because the property is situated within a Very High Fire Hazard Zone and Hardie shingles offer superior ignition resistance while closely matching the appearance of the existing wood shingles (Attachments 3 and 9).

The Residential Design Guidelines provides the following recommendations related to building materials:

4.8.2 Building Materials

- Composite, synthetic, metal, vinyl, plastic or fabricated/ imitation wood products, painted brick or imitation used brick 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 layperson 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.

Relocation of Front Door

The applicant requests approval to relocate the primary entrance from the west elevation (facing Walnut Avenue) to the north elevation (facing Hernandez Avenue). According to the applicant's Letter of Justification, historic photographs indicate that the original front door was shifted when the front porch was enclosed; therefore, the proposed relocation would restore the entry to its historic configuration and align with the residence's original architectural character (Attachments 3, 4, and 9).

Rear Porch and Railing

The applicant requests approval to remove an existing rear wood porch and railing and construct a smaller stone replacement porch. According to the applicant's Letter of Justification, the existing porch has fallen into disrepair, and the proposed stone design is intended to better align with the scale and character of the rear yard and overall site. Town records and historical documentation do not confirm whether the rear porch was part of the residence's original construction. A review of the 1981 building permit, issued for a second-story addition and foundation retrofitting, contains no reference to an existing rear porch or plans for constructing a new one. (Attachments 3, 4, and 9).

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:

- ___ 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, nor adversely affect its relationship, in terms of harmony and appropriateness, with its surroundings, including neighboring structures, nor adversely affect the character, or the historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value of the district.

CONCLUSION:

The applicant is requesting approval to replace the non-original wood shingles with Hardie board shingles, relocate the front door to face the street, and remove the rear porch and railing and replace it with a stone patio. Should the Committee find merit in the request, a recommendation of approval would be forwarded to the Community Development Director, and the project would be completed with a Building Permit. The project would not return to the Committee.

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. 1990 Anne Bloomfield Survey
2. Sanborn Fire Maps
3. Letter of Justification
4. Historic Evaluation, Provided by Applicant
5. Town Permit Records
6. Town Records - Provided by Applicant
7. HPC Conditions for Window Replacement, October 22, 2025
8. Section 3.9, Residential Design Guidelines
9. Development Plans