



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

**MINUTES OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 25, 2024**

The Historic Preservation Committee of the Town of Los Gatos conducted a regular meeting on September 25, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 4:00 PM

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Susan Burnett, Planning Commissioner Jeffrey Barnett, Committee Member Barry Cheskin and Committee Member Martha Queiroz.

Absent: Vice Chair Lee Quintana arrived at 4:03 p.m.

VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

CONSENT ITEMS (TO BE ACTED UPON BY A SINGLE MOTION)

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. 200 Hernandez Avenue
Request for Review Application PHST-24-018.

Requesting Approval for Exterior Alterations to a Pre-1941 Single-Family Residence on Property Zoned R-1:12. Located at 200 Hernandez Avenue. APN 510-21-003. Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301: Existing Facilities.
Property Owner/Applicant: Vaishali Singh-Sood
Project Planner: Sean Mullin

Sean Mullin, Senior Planner, presented the staff report.

Opened Public Comment.

Vaishali Singh-Sood, Owner/Applicant

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- They want to add a metal roof on their Mediterranean Spanish style house. The house was not built to hold the weight of a tile roof. It originally had a black shingle roof. It was updated in 2008 to a red shingle roof. It did not go through HPC at that time.
- Other similar style homes in the neighborhood have installed: metal roofing, combo, TPO with Spanish style trim, or a full metal roof with a metal edge.
- The benefits of metal are environmentally friendly, rust resistant, prevents corrosion and pollution, energy efficient, durable, withstands falling branches, and fire resistant.
- Metal roofing eliminates the chance of their insurance coverage being dropped due to roofing materials.

Committee members asked questions of the applicant.

Vaishali Singh-Sood, Owner/Applicant

- They have photos of TPO roofing but don't know the meaning of the term.
- The owner can look for lighter weight options of a metal roof that resemble tile.
- They can look for a metal roof that mimics the barrel style tile.
- They have already purchased a flat metal roof. And want to add a trim that looks like tile.
- They had people look at the roof to determine if it was strong enough to hold tile. But they did not consult a structural engineer.

Closed Public Comment.

Committee members discussed the matter.

- The previous owner had a roof that is consistent with the Mediterranean, revival façade of the home. The owner is advised to return with other options.
- Look for alternative materials.
- A standing seam metal roof looks attractive but is more contemporary. It is against the guidelines.
- The home is in a fire danger area. We want it to be as safe as possible.
- Historic homes in New Mexico, have standing seam metal roofs. But only if the roof is low sloped and less obvious. This house has a steeper slope.
- The color is the main obstacle. A red roof would be more consistent with the house's style.
- Good to have a roof design that enhances the style of the home.

MOTION:

Motion by Chair Burnett to continue this item to October 23, with the following directions: return with alternative roofing materials that are more in the style of the home; provide fireproof ratings of the roof types for comparison; and provide weight bearing structural information regarding the roof. **Seconded by Commissioner Barnett.**

VOTE:

Motion passed unanimously.

2. 14340 Browns Lane

Request for Review PHST-24-019

Consider a Request to Remove a Pre-1941 Property from the Historic Resources Inventory for Property Zoned R-1:8. Located at 14340 Browns Lane. APN 409-14-010. Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Section 15061(b)(3).

Property Owner: Cathleen Joyce Vadasz

Applicant: Gordon K. Wong

Project Planner: Erin Walters

Erin Walters, Associate Planner, presented the staff report.

Opened Public Comment.

Applicant presented the project.

Gordon Wong, Architect, Cathleen Vadasz, Owner, and Lamar Nolan, General Contractor.

- They focused on how much renovation had occurred since the original house was built. Significant remodels were done from 1970 to the 1980's.
- The current owner purchased the home in 1995. They made renovations in 1998 to the sheetrock, wiring, plumbing, and furnace.
- The previous owner made major changes. The original garage was converted to living space. The original front door entrance was moved from the right side of the house to the area located between the main house and the former converted detached garage.
- The slab on grade foundation is settling and should be replaced. The original subdivider didn't do a reasonable job with getting the permits and installing the utilities.
- The exterior is a hodge podge of materials and appears chopped up.
- They will try to keep as much of the original house as they can.

Committee members asked questions of the applicant.

Gordon Wong, Architect

- They are asking to be taken off the inventory in order to remove 50% instead of just 25% of the siding. The 50% includes materials that were added after 1941.
- They are not just repairing or replacing in-kind. They want to remodel the front of the house. There is only room to extend at the front of the property. The house is located towards the back of the property. The single-story house is under-sized.

Committee members made comments and asked questions of staff.

Staff: Erin Walters, Project Planner

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- The build date of the house is uncertain, but county records show a built date before 1941. A 1939 aerial photo shows an orchard with no house. The records clearly show a structure on the property in the 1950's.
- It is difficult to make a decision when there are no plans to look at or any assurance it was not built prior to 1941.
- When the property is removed from the inventory, the new structure will be built bigger and better.
- The whole area is remote from the center of Town so it wasn't on the Historic Bloomfield Survey. The Committee needs some framework to make consistent decisions. Have other homes in the area been taken off the inventory? If so, the Committee should make a determination for the entire area instead of piecemeal removal decisions for each property

Staff: Sean Mullin, Senior Planner.

- The focus should be on the merit of the structure itself not on the work that could take place in the future.
 - Does the structure in its current state deserve staying on the Historic Inventory?
 - The outlying areas were part of the County, and the Town does not have records.
 - Taking the entire area off the inventory is an action that the Council would need to take.
 - The Town don't have the data to determine what was altered.
 - If 50 percent of the whole building is removed, it would be technically demolished and taken off the inventory.
- If built before 1941, it fits the criteria for removal. All five points of justification are met.

Closed Public Comment.

MOTION: **Motion by Committee Member Barnett** to recommend removal from the Historic Resources Inventory. **Seconded by Committee Member Queiroz.**

VOTE: Motion passed. 4-0-1. Vice Chair Quintana abstained.

Appeal rights read.

3. 228 Bachman Avenue
Request for Review Application PHST-24-017.

Requesting a Determination Regarding the Contributing Status of an Existing Contributing Single-Family Residence Located in the Almond Grove Historic District on Property Zoned O:LHP. Located at 228 Bachman Avenue. APN 510-14-053. Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301: Existing Facilities. Property Owner/Applicant: James B. Wood
Project Planner: Sean Mullin

Committee Member Martha Queiroz recused themselves from Item 3, 228 Bachman Avenue, as their property is located within 1,000 feet of the subject property.

Sean Mullin, Senior Planner, presented the staff report.

Opened Public Comment.

J. B. Wood, Owner

- They currently live in a house next door at 238 Bachman. They bought the property at 228 Bachman in April to create a new residence to age-in place with an elevator and other ADA compliant features.
- The property was derelict for more than 10 years.
- It is a commercial property surrounded by residential structures.
- The original garage was demolished.
- The entire rear was paved for parking lot.
- House was remodeled many times and went from 612 sf to 775 sf.
- There are various types of sidings and windows.
- In 2004, the HPC said it could possibly be demolished.
- Library research shows no known historical significance.
- Before hiring an architect, they want it to be removed from the inventory so that demolition can be done.
- The house doesn't look like any other house in the neighborhood.

Committee members asked questions of the applicant and staff.

Staff: Sean Mullin, Project Planner

- The house is in a historic district and can be designated as contributing or non-contributing. Non-contributing status can result if additions and materials are not original. When an application is submitted, then it will come before the HPC for a formal recommendation. The property is brought before HPC to evaluate the contributing status of the structure.
- The Committee looks at the façade and street view. It has distinctive features. It is in a Historic district. Committee wants to maintain the look and feel of the Historic district.
- The house can still be improved, but it must follow the guidelines.

J. B. Wood, Owner

- The building was last used as a medical office.
- The Previous owner, Robert Granham, bought the property in 2004. Since then, nothing has changed. It has been untouched and unmaintained.
- Mr. Granham will buy back the property if the Woods are not able to get permission to demolish and build something new.
- They have called the Town many times to contact Mr. Granham to perform basic yard maintenance.
- The house that they currently live in, was built in 2012 and has the same roofline.

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Staff: Sean Mullin, Project Planner

- If zoned as office, the General Plan would have to be amended and rezoned.
- The 2004 HPC minutes were provided for reference, not to justify demolition.
- If an application is submitted the Town Code requires that a structural report be provided.

J. B. Wood, Owner

- We would like to demolish the existing building and build a new similar structure in the front of the property.

Eric Beckstrom, Neighbor

- Eric has lived on Bachman. That property seems to be a magnet for dumped garbage. That house has always been empty and looks bereft.

Paul Styka, Neighbor

- Paul also walks past the house. It attracts garbage. It is difficult to get housing in this area. The applicant is spending their own money to take down a derelict property and provide more housing. Los Gatos doesn't need an empty house, but more homes filled with families.

Closed Public Comment

Committee members discussed the matter.

- The 1989 Bloomberg photo shows very little change to the front elevation.
- If the house is kept as a contributor, encourage the applicant to come back with a proposal. Try to see if we can work together. There are opportunities to remodel or improve without demolishing it.
- The findings for removal have been met.
- The motion should include that the applicant return with some preliminary design or concept that the Committee can comment on. Then we can work together. It is better for everyone that the property be developed.

MOTION: **Motion by Committee Member Cheskin** to forward a recommendation to the Community Development Director to keep the Contributing Status of an Existing Contributing Single-Family Residence. The applicant is encouraged to come back with preliminary concepts for early review.
Seconded by Vice Chair Quintana.

VOTE: **Motion passed unanimously.**

Appeal rights read.

4. 145 Tait Avenue

Minor Residential Development Application MR-24-010.

Requesting Reconsideration of a Request for Approval for Construction of a Second-Story Addition Exceeding 100 Square Feet and Exterior Alterations to an Existing Contributing Single-Family Residence Located in the Almond Grove Historic District on Property Zoned R-1D:LHP Pursuant to Town Council Policy 2-010. APN 510-18-029.

Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301: Existing Facilities.

Property Owner: Jennifer McNellis

Applicant: Eric Beckstrom

Project Planner: Erin Walters

Committee Member Martha Queiroz recused themselves from Item 4, 145 Tait Avenue, as their property is located within 1,000 feet of the subject property.

Sean Mullin, Senior Planner, explained the request for reconsideration.

Gabrielle Whelan, Town Attorney

- The request for reconsideration is of any action. In this case, the action is the referral to Larry Cannon, Town Architect, for outside review to a date uncertain.

Opened public comment.

Paul Styka and Jenny McNellis, Owners

- They love the quiet streets and small-town feel. Next year they will be growing their family. The house is currently unsafe and unlivable. They are renting in Santa Clara until the home is rebuilt. They would rather put money into renovating the house instead of paying rent. They don't want to change the neighborhood. They are a young couple looking for a safe place to own.

Eric Beckstrom, Architect

- Last time, there was confusion on the front elevation. This time, they presented the house in a 3D modeling program on a laptop to the Committee. This showed the existing house. All the other houses have 6-to-8-foot fences. The depiction of other houses was added to show scale.
- The roof line has a gable to the side. Currently there is not enough headroom for a bedroom addition. They intend to balance the roof by running the gable all the way through. The second story stairs also need more headroom.
- The existing Anderson windows were installed in 1996.
- They intend to keep the bay and projection. The bay jogs out and stays where it is. The new addition is 3 inches back. The furnace near the bay was added in 1996.

Closed public comment.

Committee members discussed the matter.

- In support of it being reconsidered.
- Would still like to see the consulting architect's recommendations. This doesn't preclude incorporating any additional new information.
- After seeing the 3D rendering, we don't need to refer to the Town architect.
- The applicant will bring samples of the proposed Marvin windows to the next meeting.
- The Town Architect is normally not requested to review HPC projects.

MOTION: **Motion by Vice Chair Quintana** to deny the reconsideration. Ask that the Town architect to review the plans. New information may be presented.
Seconded by Chair Burnett.

VOTE: **Motion denied 2-2. No action. Commissioner Barnett and Committee Member Cheskin opposed.**

OTHER BUSINESS *(Up to three minutes may be allotted to each speaker on any of the following items.)*

None

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Sean Mullin has been promoted to Planning Manager, effective September 30, 2024.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

- Contact Sean for the appropriate method to get an item put on the Town Council agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the September 25, 2024 meeting as approved by the Historic Preservation Committee.

/s/ Sean Mullin, AICP, Senior Planner