

ORDINANCE 2165

ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 1919 RELATING TO ZONE CHANGE NO. 86 (ALMOND GROVE HISTORIC DISTRICT)

The Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos does hereby ordain:

SECTION I

The district delineated on the attached map is hereby designated historically and culturally Significant as the Almond Grove Historic District HD-80-1A.

SECTION II

The district is designated to be historically, architecturally, or aesthetically significant for the reasons listed below:

- A. Property: Almond Grove District. Boundaries: Bean to the south, Glen Ridge Avenue to the west, to but not including the lots facing Saratoga Avenue to the North, and to but not including the lots facing North Santa Cruz Avenue to the east (see map Exhibit A).
- B. Historic designation no.: HD-80-1A
- C. Description of designation: District
- D. Description of characteristics which justify the designation:

Historical: The Almond Grove addition was the first and largest subdivision after the incorporation of the Town of Los Gatos. Of approximately 40 acres, the historic tract was the last land, formerly an almond orchard as its name suggests, of 162½ acres bought in 1865 by John Mason from Edward Auzerais, an important landowner in Santa Clara County after whom Auzerais Street in San Jose and Auzerais Court in Los Gatos was named.

The purchasers and developers of Almond Grove were four very important figures of Los Gatos history and honored by street names still used in the area. They were Alphonse Eli Wilder, banker; Augustine Nicholson, capitalist; Magnus Tait, farmer and miner; and John Bean, orchardist.

Many important contributors to the development of the Town lived in the Almond Grove area. L.E. Hamilton, secretary of the Odd Fellows and director of the 1889 Los Gatos Cemetery Association, built his own house at 139 Wilder (which is still owned and occupied by his daughter). In addition, he also did extensive carpentry Work for Mrs. Winchester of the famous Winchester House in San Jose. The house at 115 Wilder was owned by Clarence Lydon, nephew of town pioneer John Lyndon. E.N. Davis, head trustee (mayor) on the board of trustees, 18980-1902, lived at 131 Tait. The Magnus Tait home is 231 Tait. 129 Tait was the home of E.E. Place and birthplace of George Place, owner of Place Mortuary housed in the Coggeshall Mansion (a Town historic landmark now the site of the Chart House). 328 Bachman is the “Massol” house. Fenilen Massol was Los Gatos mayor, 1894-97. 354 Bachman was the home of George McMurty, who as a youth helped haul stones to build Forbes Mill Annex and later became the first treasurer of incorporated Los Gatos, a post he held for over 40 years. 216 Glen Ridge was the home of W.H.B. Trantham, who in 1885 became the first owner of the Los Gatos News after its founder temporarily retired. Trantham owner the News (later the Mail-News) until 1976. The Mail-News remained in existence until 1953. 200 Glen Ridge was at one time the home of Raymond J. Fisher, educator, after whom Fisher school is named. John Bean started a business right in Almond Grove that evolved into a local family dynasty’s multi-national corporation, Food Machinery Corporation. Plagued by San Jose scale on his orchard trees, he developed an improved chemical spray pump, a significant development in an era of tremendous fruit growing in Santa Clara Valley. Bean gave his son-in-law, David C. Crummey, a share in the business. Historical evidence indicated that Crummey lived in the house on the corner of Bean and Santa Cruz Avenues, 212 Bean Avenue, until the business prospered and he built the elaborate mansion at 33 Glen Ridge Avenue. D.C.’s son, John Crummey, further improved the pump and expanded the Almond Grove headquartered business. (In Horatio Algier tradition, he enterprisingly rode a bicycle up and down the Sacramento Valley and lined up enough order to keep the company in business for years.) Under Crummey, the Bean Spray Pump Company became F.M.C. (still retaining a division entitled Bean

Spray Pump Company). Under John Crummey's son-in-law, Paul Davies, F.M.C. became an international corporation, and a member of his family still serves on the board of directors.

Architectural: The predominance of Victorian architecture, including informal Wood frame cottages and impressive homes, intermixed with bungalow-style cottages Colonial Revival and Mission Revival homes built somewhat later reflect the history and development of the district. Individual architectural distinction is not the important factor in an historic district but the neighborhood entity created. The Almond Grove area is unique in that of the 78 pre-1895 houses built here, 64 or about 82% still grace the streets. In addition, 22 houses built between 1895 and 1908, 31 houses built between 1908 and 1916 and another 30 houses built between 1917 and 1930 still exist. The 1989 earthquake significantly damaged two houses built prior to the 1900's and one built in the 1920's which were demolished. A total of 180 structures now line the streets within the boundaries of the district, 147 or 82% of those structures were built by 1930. The streetscapes remain basically unchanged. Lending the district a special old-time feeling, that for many symbolize old Los Gatos and represents an important part of the Town's heritage.

Sources: Robert E. Lee, supported by Sanborn maps, Town of Los Gatos and Santa Clara County tax records; and History of Los Gatos by George Bruntz.

E. Listed below are Town features recommended for preservation. Review by the Historic Preservation Committee is required for any changes to these features.

1. Roads are concrete and should be repaired to maintain appearance as of the year 1976.
2. Date stamp in concrete sidewalks.

SECTION III

This Ordinance was introduced at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos on October 6, 2008, and adopted by the following vote as an ordinance of the Town of Los Gatos at a meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos on October 20, 2008. This ordinance takes effect 30 days after it is adopted.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

AYES: Steve Glickman, Diane McNutt, Joe Pirzynski, Mike Wasserman and Mayor Barbara Spector.

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

SIGNED:

s/Barbara Spector

**MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA**

ATTEST:

s/Jackie Rose

**CLERK OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA**