

Homeowner's Statement

(Includes justification statement and historical research details)

To whom it may concern,

We moved to Los Gatos in 2010 and lived many years in a townhouse in the Vasona Terrace complex. Our kids went to Los Gatos schools. When they grew up and moved out, we moved to the Almond Grove neighborhood, to 321 Bachman Avenue in September 2024. We love this quiet historic neighborhood!

Our plan for the home is to add an attached single car garage in the back of the property opening to the alley, add an ADU above the garage if possible, and add more historically-inspired elements to the front and side of the house to allow it to fit in better with the other historic homes nearby. We feel that turning the large front window into an (above ground) bay window and adding covered porches to the front and side would accomplish this task. Adding a garage in the back of the house off the alley would allow us to park and charge our electric car and free up a space on the street, as well as provide much needed storage space for this small house. We plan to have the garage, porches, and bay window fit aesthetically with the existing house and add elements to make it look more Victorian style like other houses nearby.

We would also like to move our laundry area from the kitchen to the new garage, since the kitchen is small we would rather use the washer/dryer space for kitchen storage instead.

If the ADU is not approved, we would like to make the garage as tall as possible to allow for us to have as much attic / loft storage space as possible. The garage will be in the back of the house away from the front street and the garage of our next door neighbor's house (to the west, at 240 Massol Avenue) is already taller than our house so we hope a garage of the maximum allowable height will be acceptable (see photo of the neighbor's garage later in this document).

If the ADU is not approved, we would also like to have a full bathroom in the garage as well, for convenience.

The house already has some areas that extend into the easements, but we do not plan to build further into those areas, except for the garage itself. This property is small and non-standard and we plan to apply to get approval to have the garage built closer than 5 feet from the south property line in order to get as much garage space as is allowed. We have noticed **other garages and structures for houses backing on to the same alley that are already quite close to their property lines (3 feet or less), so we hope a 3 or 4 feet easement would be an acceptable distance.** For example:

- 231 Tate Avenue has a 'cottage' structure next to the alley that looks to be right up against the property line, the fence on the south side is only about a foot from the structure. The cottage was built around 1965 (source: 2005 historic tour brochure).

- 225 and 223 Tate Avenue have garages opening to the alley that are only about 3 ft from their fences on the right (south).
- 217 Tate Avenue has a carport opening to the alley that is only about 3 ft from their fence on the right (south)
- The garage for our immediate neighbor's house (240 Massol) appears to be between about 4ft from our fence at one end but only about 2 ft from our fence at the other.

We logged into the computer in the lobby of the LG planning office and looked at what was on file for our own house as well as properties nearby. Details are on later pages in this document but here are the highlights:

- **1996 Architectural plans for our own house showed that it used to have a garage with a 'bedroom/loft' above the garage.** This was demolished in 1996 and replaced with a new bedroom and bathroom attached to the main house. We have obtained approval from the architect from 1996 (who is still in business) and attached copies of the plans to this application.
- We also found architectural diagrams on file for 312 Bachman (across the street) and 240 Massol (next door), but neither of the diagrams showed easement lines (only property lines). The plans for 240 Massol especially do seem to confirm that the garage is very close to the fence between our two properties and is likely nonconforming (see later pages for details)

We did some research at the Los Gatos library as well. Details are in later pages in this document but here are the highlights:

- **Our house was built in 1939, based on the 1941 Tax Assessment Survey (the survey says the house was 2 years old at the time). This differs from what the real estate listing says (1949).**
- We think our house used to be part of the property at 240 Massol Avenue, based on the 'Remodeling' section of a 1971 survey where the owner said "**back property split up and sold to closest property owners**", but it doesn't give a year. (source: Historic Property Research Collection)

We have spoken to our immediate neighbours at 307 Bachman (immediate neighbor to the left (east), across the alley), 240 Massol (immediate neighbor to the right (west)), and 232 Massol (immediate neighbor behind us, backing onto the same alley, we share a fence), and they don't have any issues with us building an attached garage.

Please see the rest of the pages in this document for pictures of nearby houses and more details on the research we did.

Thank you for your time considering our application. Let us know if you have any questions.

Stanley and Jean Melax
321 Bachman Avenue, Los Gatos CA

Photos of nearby structures:

The garage for our immediate neighbor to the right (240 Massol) is about 4 ft from our shared fence at one end, but only about 2 ft away from our shared fence at the other end:



The garage at 240 Massol (next door neighbor) is taller than our house:



View of the alley, standing next to our house, looking South. Note the first structure, a 'cottage' at the back of 231 Tate, is very close to the alley, so probably very close to the property line.



The 'cottage' at the back of 231 Tate is within a foot of the fence on the right side:



The garage at the back of 225 Tate is about 3 feet from the fence to its right:



The garage at the back of 223 Tate is about 3 feet from the fence to its right:



The carport at the back of 217 Tate is about 3 feet from the fence to its right:



321 Bachman Avenue Research Notes (more details)

We purchased the house from Patricia Ann McCaffrey on 9/25/2024

For quick reference, these are the properties nearby:

1. 328 Bachman (across the street)
2. 320 Bachman (across the street)
3. 312 Bachman (across the street)
4. 308 Bachman (across the street)
5. 300 Bachman (across the street)
6. 307 Bachman (immediate neighbor to the left (east), across the alley)
7. 240 Massol (immediate neighbor to the right (west))
8. 232 Massol (immediate neighbor behind us, backing onto the same alley, we share a fence)
9. 231 Tate (nearby, backs on to the same alley)
10. 225 Tate (nearby, backs on to the same alley)
11. 303 Bachman (two houses to the left (east))

LG Planning department computer 7/25/2025

321 Bachman: there are **1996 architectural diagrams in the microfiche folder showing a new primary bedroom and a bathroom were added, and that an existing garage with a “bedroom / loft” above it was demolished.** The architect (Gary Kohlsaas, garyk@kohlsaasarch.com) gave permission for me to have copies of the plans (received 8/4/2025 and are included with this application).

LG Planning department computer 8/1/2025

- #1: has permit applications on file but no architectural plans
- #3: lots of architectural plans to add a basement, etc, but none showed property lines
- #6: no architectural diagrams or plans; 2018 permit to refurbish cottage, new front door, 5 new windows; secondary dwelling unit approved in 1985 but no plans on file
- #7: 103 pages of microfiche, ran out of time to review them all but there was a 1974 architectural diagram that might be relevant but the scans were very faint.
- #10: ran out of time to research fully
- #11: building permit on file for 1951 but no architectural plans on file
- Nothing major on file for the other neighbors

LG Library 8/3/2025

We planned to look at the Sanborn Maps on file at the LG library but the 'history room' was not open the day we did the research (only open Tuesdays from 11:30-1:30 according to the sign on the door)

Project Bellringer: only #1 was included on the list in the binder, but a newspaper article from 1976 says #9 was a "Bellringer house" too.

Historic Property Research Collection:

- #1: Sometime between 1934 and 1945 added a small porch off the dining room, and front porch was screened in with climbing roses and honeysuckle, 'garage had been in lower backyard', built estimated "1885 A.K".
- #7: ~1880 A.K., **under 'Remodeling' section of 1971 survey says "back property split up and sold to closest property owners" but doesn't give a year.** Also says "33 ft additional in back area" and "garage used for office".
- #9: a 2005 historic tour brochure says "about 1965, Douglas and Marjorie Rose purchased the property and built a cottage on the back of the lot that they rented out in addition to the house. That cottage is not open for viewing", 1976 newspaper article says it is a Bellringer house, has a phantom front door that once opened to Tate but now front door is elsewhere
- #10: has a folder but nothing relevant to our project
- No other houses above has folders in the collection

Anne Bloomfield's Survey of 1991: none of the nearby houses are included, nothing on Bachman or Massol, a few on Tate but only up to #30 Tate.

1941 Tax Assessment Survey (note these show dimensions of buildings but not their relationship to property lines):

- 321 Bachman: **says the house was 2 years old in 1941**, a scan is included in this application
- #1: 45 years old
- #2: 17 years old
- #3: 40 years old
- #4: 40 yo
- #5: 10 yo
- #6: not included
- #7: 30 years old, worth \$1700
- #8: not included
- #9: 40 years old
- #10: not included

Planning department computer 8/4/2025:

LFTown / planning / address files / Bachman Ave / 321 / microfiche folder:

- Nothing under any of the other folders
- Home occupation permit 5/26/88 for Joyce Bahnsen
- 97 scanned pages. Filled out form to request these documents on 8/4/2025.
- Page 71 and 82: **exhibit C PLAT to accompany the lot line adjustment Feb 1996** (page 82) and Sep 1996 (page 71). Filled out form to request these documents on 8/4/2025.

FTown / building / address / Bachman Ave / 321 folder (requested and received copies of all on 8/4/2025):

- permits folder has 3 folders:
 - B17-0257 - permit for new roof - 4/21/2017
 - E18-135 - permit for add three circuit to allow the remaining knob and tube that is in use to be abandon, alter 19 lights, switches and outlets 10/05/2018
 - M18-102 - permit to install condenser 7/12/2018
- Plans folder has one folder B21-0233: plans for chimney repair 3/21/17
- Microfiche folder has 49 pages including the architectural diagrams

240 Massol

- Has plans approved 1/20/15 is for removing a brick fireplace and window, adding a breakfast nook, etc but the plans also show the existing garage
- On the 2015 plans, the only thing that looks nonconforming to easements is the garage. There is no scale marking on the plans but it is 3/16" away from the fence when viewed at 50%
- "The Poncetta Residence"
- Architect: Flury Bryant design group

312 Bachman

- Page 94 of microfiche has an architectural plan. The only thing that might be non-conforming is the extended garage (I think, its hard to read as the focus of the diagrams was the main house only)
- 17 May 2004, approved 6/21/2004
- "Hubbard Santangeli Residence"
- Architect E. Gary Schloh

LG library, 8/4/2025:

Polk directories (shows residents of 321 Bachman):

1939, 1940: 321 Bachman is not listed

1941: Biermann C F
1943, 1944, 1945: Kleiner Rudolph
1947: Countryman J. L.
1949-50, 1954, 1956, 1958: Fetsch Carrie Mrs
1952: no pink street guide section
1955: no Los Gatos in guide
1960, 1962, 1964: Young Doris Mrs
1965: Vandeberg Bessie E Mrs
1967: "vacant"
1968: Smyth Ethelyn H Mrs
1969: "no return"
1970, 1971, 1972, 1974: Hamner Eldo Mrs (spelled Hammer in 1970)
1974 was last Polk Directory on file, telephone directories after that don't have street look-up