

HP Garage

367 Addison Avenue, Palo Alto, California



◀ The restored HP Garage in 2006.



▶ The garage is California Historical Landmark No. 976—Birthplace of Silicon Valley. (1939 photo)

Tucked away on a quiet, tree-lined residential street near Stanford University, the HP Garage stands today as the enduring symbol of innovation and the entrepreneurial spirit. It was in this humble 12x18-foot building that college friends Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard pursued the dream of a company of their own. Guided by an unwavering desire to develop innovative and useful products, the two men blazed a trail at the forefront of the electronics revolution.

History of the Garage

Today, the garage stands behind a two-story Shingle Style home built for Dr. John C. Spencer about 1905. The exact construction date of the garage is unknown, but while there is no evidence of its presence on insurance maps dated 1908, by 1924 it is clearly denoted on updated documents as a private garage.

In 1938, Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard decided to “make a run for it” in business. Dave left his job at General Electric in Schenectady, New York, and returned to Palo Alto while Bill scouted rentals. He found one perfect for their needs on Addison Avenue. Chosen specifically because of a garage he and Dave could use as their workshop, the property also offered a three-room, ground-floor flat for Dave and his new wife Lucile and an 8x18-foot shed for Bill. They shared the \$45 per month rent.

The garage served as research lab, development workshop, and manufacturing facility for early products, including the Model 200A audio oscillator. The company, founded in 1939, was named with a coin toss. The garage was soon outgrown, and in 1940 HP moved into larger quarters on Page Mill Road.

The garage was dedicated as the Birthplace of Silicon Valley in 1989, and the property was acquired by HP in 2000. HP is proud to have worked closely with the City of Palo Alto to return the house, garage, and shed to conditions much as they were in 1939. The legacy project was completed in 2005. In 2007, the property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

While the HP Garage is not open for public tours, individual visitors and small groups may view and photograph the property and landmark from the sidewalk. Addison Avenue remains a quiet residential neighborhood, and HP urges you to respect the privacy of our neighbors.

Garage timeline

c. 1905 House at 367 (then numbered 369) Addison Ave. is built for Dr. John Spencer, a physician and early mayor of Palo Alto.

1919–1920 The house is divided into two apartments numbered 367 and 369.

1924 The 12x18-foot garage first appears on Sanborn Insurance maps of Palo Alto.

1940 Hewlett-Packard Company moves to a larger rented building on Page Mill Road. Dave and Lucile move to the Palo Alto neighborhood of Barron Park.

1985 The garage is designated a City of Palo Alto landmark.

1987 The garage becomes California Historical Landmark No. 976.

2000 HP acquires the Addison Avenue property.

1900

1910

1920

1930

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990

2000



◀ Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard at the dedication of the garage in 1989.

1934 Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard graduate from Stanford University.

1935 Dave moves to Schenectady, New York, to work for General Electric. Bill remains at Stanford to prepare for graduate work at MIT.

1936 Bill completes grad work at MIT and returns to Palo Alto.

1937 Dave visits Bill in Palo Alto; they have their first official business meeting.

1938 Dave takes a leave of absence from GE and moves back to Palo Alto with his new wife, Lucile.

The Addison Avenue rental is specifically chosen because it has a garage.

David and Lucile move into the three-room apartment on the first floor (#367) and Bill moves into the shed in the back. The landlady, Mrs. Ione Spencer, lives in the upstairs flat at #369.

Bill and Dave begin part-time work in the garage with \$538 in working capital, including the value of Dave's used Sears-Roebuck drill press. They develop numerous products, including HP's first product, the Model 200A audio oscillator.

1939 January 1, Bill and Dave formalize their partnership. They

decide the company's name with a coin toss.

After Bill and Flora's marriage, the small shed becomes the HP business office.



◀ Dave Packard (left) and Bill Hewlett in the garage. (1939 photo)

1989 Dedication ceremonies are held for the "Birthplace of Silicon Valley."

2005 HP restores the garage, house, and shed at 367 Addison Ave.

HP Garage and Corporate Headquarters



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