



STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2018-06 – 120 Edmunds Road - Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 120 Edmunds Road (Assessor's Parcel ID # 107-47, 107-52)
Applicant: 120 Edmunds Nominee Realty Trust
Property Owner: 120 Edmunds Nominee Realty Trust
Date: Report prepared 6/1/2018 for 6/11/2018 Historical Commission Meeting
Staff Contact: Claudia Zarazua, Planner
Staff Recommendation: **Preferably Preserved**

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Applications for Eligibility Notice and Preservation Determination were submitted on January 26, 2018 and May 17, 2018, respectively, indicating the intent to demolish, in its entirety, a building located on the property and used as a dwelling. An Eligibility Notice was issued on January 30, 2018 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. A public hearing before the Historical Commission is scheduled for June 11, 2018.

DESCRIPTION

In consideration of the application for Eligibility Notice, it was determined that the original dwelling was constructed no earlier than March 14, 1932, the date provided on Building Permit "No. 4538" for the construction of a "dwelling" on 120 Edmunds Road Permit "No. 4539" by the same owner was issued on the same date for a "two-car garage."

The land was originally owned and developed by Albion Clapp. See Figure 1. Certain parcels of land, including this property, were purchased by Haynes and Hernandez in 1930-1933. See Figure 2 & 3. The property was purchased by Wallace and Evelyn Temple in 1933. Mr. Temple, a building contractor, sought a building permit for a dwelling in 1934.

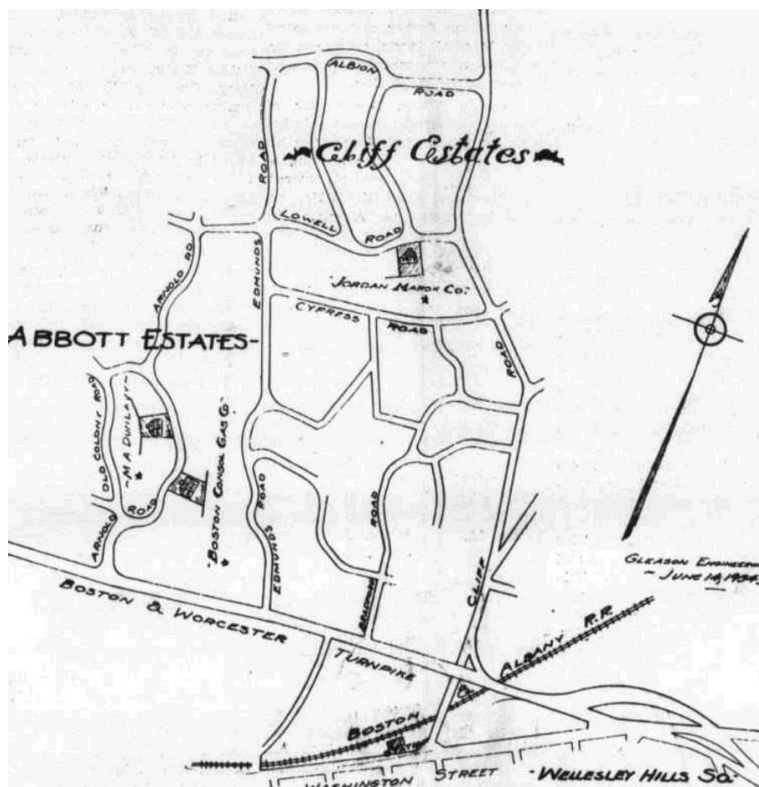


Figure 1. Plan of Abbott and Cliff Estates in 1935. Courtesy of Wellesley Townsman

The property was acquired by Grover and Helen Cronin in 1935. Mr. Cronin founded the department store Grover Cronin in Waltham in 1925. His work in retail is remembered as innovative and groundbreaking. He introduced the open plan department store and the glass display system to provide more accessibility to the customer. As the car became more accessible, he adapted the growth of the store by acquiring adjacent land to provide parking for customers. Aside from his contributions to the field, Mr. Cronin was also well known for his commitment to the community. Under his supervision, the store was known for its organized holiday parades as well as fashion displays. On his personal time, he was involved in charities and local organizations. After his death, his wife inherited the property in 1953.

The property was later acquired by Patricia and John Griffith in 1983. The house was later sold to Desmond and Dorothy Heathwood in 1990. In 1996, Deborah and William Elfers purchased the property. In early 2018, the property was acquired by 120 Edmunds Nominee Realty Trust.

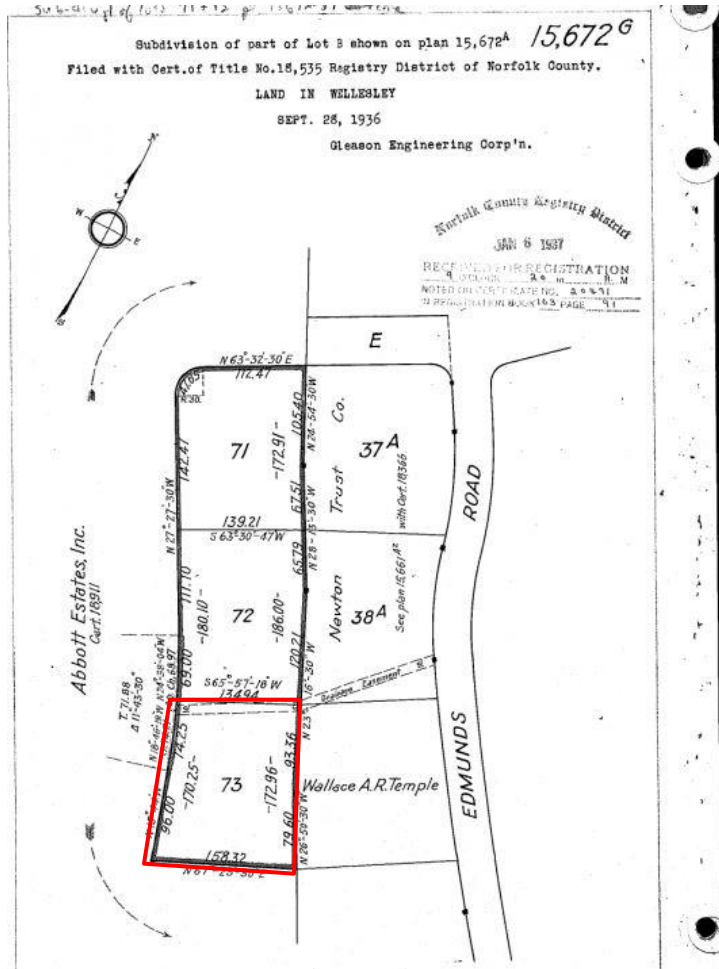


Figure 2 Subdivision Plan by Gleason Engineering. Courtesy of Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

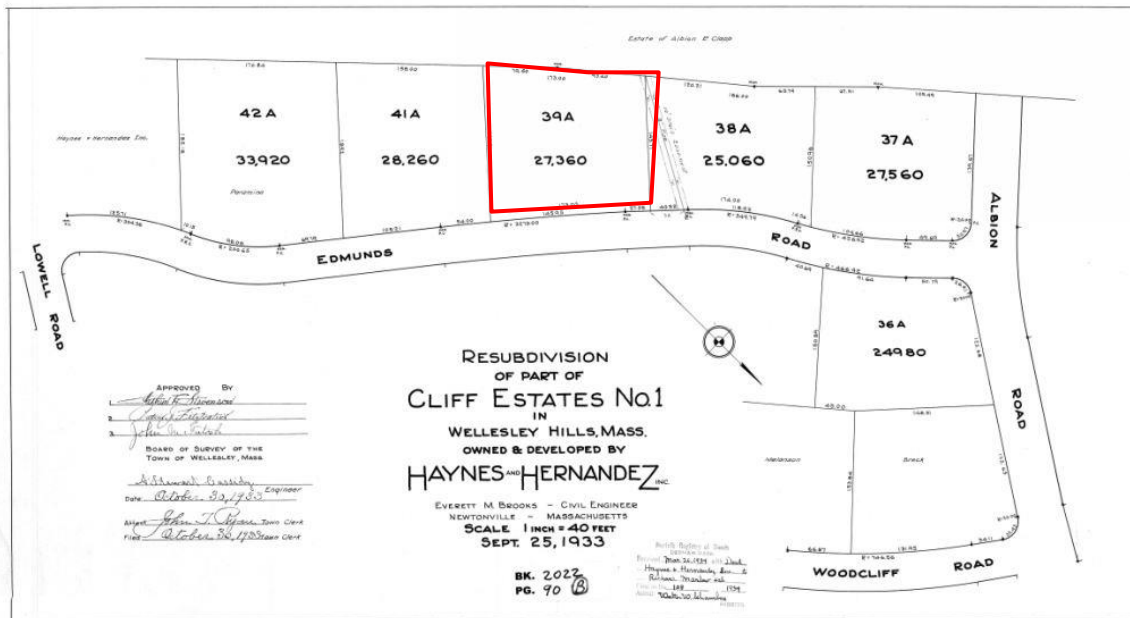


Figure 3. Resubdivision Plan by Haynes and Hernandez from 1933. Courtesy of Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

The dwelling is a 2-story dwelling with a full height entry porch in the Greek Revival style. The visible facades have been modestly altered. The front porch has the characteristic columns, in this case four ionic-style columns. In 1988, a major addition, designed by Huygens, DiMella and Shaffer, was built to extend the family room on the first floor and build an indoor lap swimming pool. In 1998, a second floor bedroom addition was built. In 2001, a tool shed was built in the rear yard adjacent to the tennis courts.

PRESERVATION DETERMINATION STANDARDS

In consideration of a Preservation Determination for the building, the Historical Commission is to determine whether or not the building should be Preferably Preserved, a term defined as building “the demolition of which that is proposed...would be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage of the Town because such Building is (i) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America, (ii) historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings, or (iii) located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the boundary line of any federal or local historic district and contextually similar to the Buildings located in the adjacent federal or local historic district.”

If the Commission determines that the Building should be Preferably Preserved, then no Demolition Permit with respect to such Building shall be issued until twelve (12) months after the date of the Preservation Determination.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is of the opinion that the subject building **is not** (iii) located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the boundary line of any federal or local historic district and contextually similar to the Buildings located in the adjacent federal or local historic district, but that the building **is** (i) associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America, and (ii) historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings, and not.

With respect to standard (i), Staff is of the opinion that the association to Grover Cronin is relevant to the history of Wellesley, the region and the rest of the country. Mr. Cronin was a pioneer in the field of department stores and understood the role of retail in vibrant downtown areas. See Figure 4.

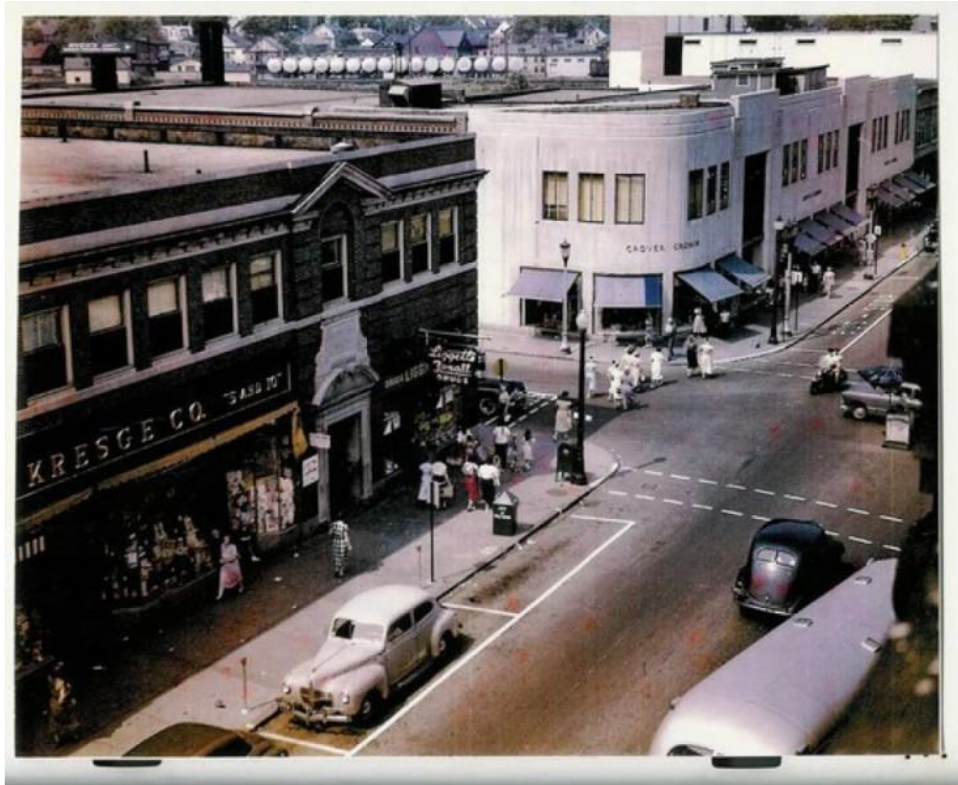


Figure 4. Grover Cronin Store. Courtesy of Denise J. Dubé

With respect to standard (ii), Staff is of the opinion that the construction method and style of the dwelling is architecturally important by reason of period and style and is a distinct and important example of Greek Revival architecture. In addition, the potential demolition of the house at 120 Edmunds would be a detriment to the character a neighborhood that has remained of similar scale and architecture.

Therefore, based upon the above, **Staff is of the opinion that the demolition of the subject building would be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage of the neighborhood and Town and thus Staff recommends that the building should be deemed Preferably Preserved.**