



## STAFF REPORT

### Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

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Application: DR-2018-50 – 14 Wilde Road - Preservation Determination  
Subject Property: 14 Wilde Road (Assessor's Parcel ID # 170-56)  
Applicant: Jerry and Tara Ventura  
Property Owner: Jerry and Tara Ventura  
Date: Report prepared 11/8/2018 for 11/19/2018 Historical  
Commission Meeting  
Staff Contact: Claudia Zarazua, Planner  
Staff Recommendation: **Not Preferably Preserved**

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#### APPLICATION OVERVIEW

On October 19, 2018, the Applicant submitted plans to the Planning Department to confirm the percentage of the existing exterior of the dwelling at 14 Wilde Road to be affected by work that includes partial demolition and an addition. Planning Department Staff determined that the proposed work would affect more than 50% of the total existing exterior surface of the dwelling (59%), therefore qualifying as a Demolition under the Bylaw. Based on this determination, an application for Eligibility Notice was submitted on October 25, 2018. An Eligibility Notice was issued on October 29, 2018 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. An application for Preservation Determination was submitted on October 25, 2018. A public hearing before the Historical Commission is scheduled for November 19, 2018.

#### DESCRIPTION

In consideration of the application for Eligibility Notice, it was determined that the dwelling was originally constructed no later than December 14, 1937 based on a Building Permit issued to owner David Ahern.

Harold C. Wiswall, a local developer, created the original lot after he purchased the land from Fred Abraham, a florist that ran an elaborate system of on-site greenhouses (See *Figure 1 & 2*). Mr. Wiswall was the son of Dr. Edward Wiswall, founder of the Wiswall Sanitarium (the now-defunct Charles River Hospital).

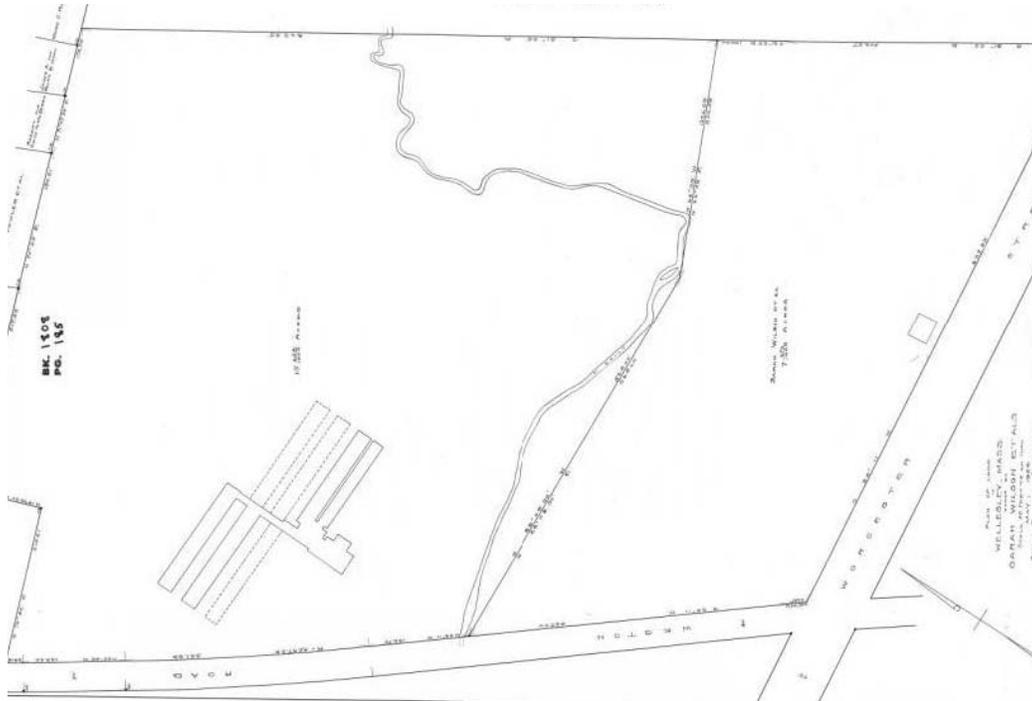


Figure 1. Weston Road, 1928 by Gleason Engineering Co., Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

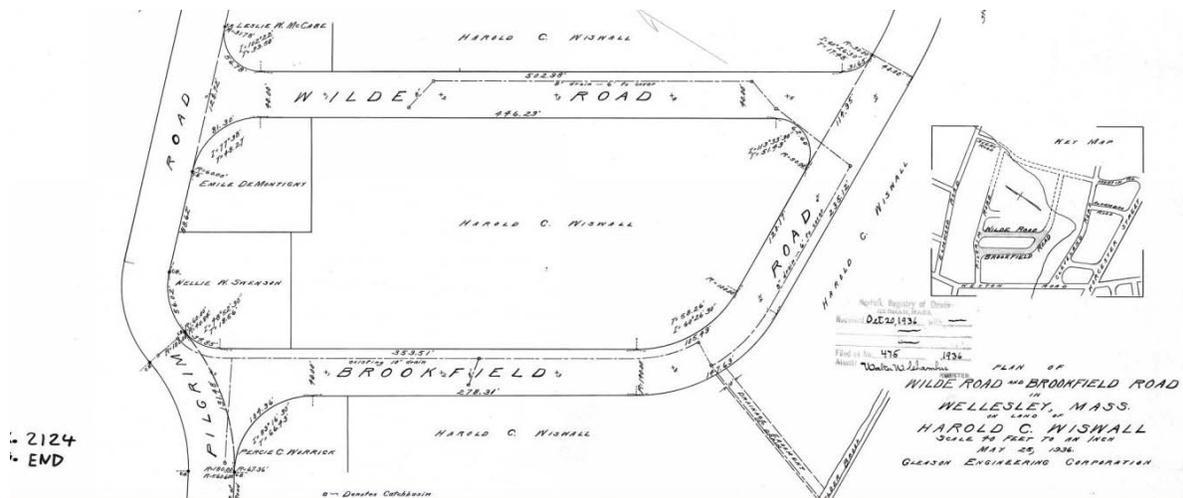


Figure 2. Plan of Wilde Road and Brookfield Road, Land owned by Harold Wiswall, 1936. Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

According to the building permit, the house was designed by regional architect Carl F. Merrick, and built by Robbins and Benham, Inc. for Sarah and David Ahern. Mr. and Mrs. Ahern were active citizens of Wellesley. The house was sold to Marcia Abbott and Thomas Llemow in 1985. Under the ownership of Marcia Abbott, the house was sold to Mary and Robert Connor in 1997. The property was sold to Joel and Barbara Gross in 1999. The house was sold to Thomas and Kristin Donahue in 2003. The property was acquired by William Pruett and Monica Herrera in 2008. It was sold to the current owners Jerry and Tara Ventura in 2012.

The dwelling is a two-story building with a hipped roof, attached garage, and not significantly altered since its construction. Staff believes the architecture of the house is best characterized as Adam Style of the Colonial Revival period with elements representative of such style like small-paned windows and heavy window frames, as well as two chimneys. The siding is perceived to be wood cladding. The overall condition of the existing house is above average.

The house is a non-conforming structure and will require additional review with the Zoning Board of Appeals. The driveway is located on and accessed by Wilde Road on the western corner of the property.



Figure 2. Neighborhood Context

As a partial Demolition, the Applicant has submitted architectural drawings to preserve the original building, build a one-story rear addition to expand the kitchen and living room, build a new two-car garage with a second floor master bedroom, and a two-story addition on the right side of the existing house.

## **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 a 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** (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, nor (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, (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.

With respect to standard (ii), Staff is of the opinion that the existing dwelling is architecturally important by reason of period and style, by itself and in the context of the neighborhood. However, based upon the scope of the proposed work, Staff is of the opinion that the partial demolition would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage of the Town.

Therefore, based upon the above, **Staff recommends that the building not be deemed Preferably Preserved based on the scope of work identified in the submitted plans.** Staff recommends that action by the Historical Commission concluding the same be based on the submitted plans, therefore requiring any alterations to the scope similarly impacting 50% or more of the existing exterior of the dwelling to be reviewed as a new application prior to the issuance of permits from the Building Department.