



STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2018-60– 84 Whittier Road - Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 84 Whittier Road (Assessor's Parcel ID #29-22)
Applicant: Jo Ellen Toussaint
Property Owner: Jo Ellen Toussaint
Date: Report prepared 12/28/2018 for 1/14/2019 Historical
Commission Meeting
Staff Contact: Claudia Zarazua, Planner
Staff Recommendation: **Preferably Preserved**

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Applications for Eligibility Notice and Preservation Determination were submitted on December 18, 2018 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 December 18, 2018 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. A public hearing before the Historical Commission was scheduled for January 14, 2019.

DESCRIPTION

In consideration of the application for Eligibility Notice, it was determined that the building was constructed no earlier than September 20, 1932 when the building permit "4158" for a dwelling was issued. The property was originally part of the Longfellow Estates subdivision (now known as Poets Corner). See Figure 1. Robert Curran, a well-known builder in the area, filed the original building permit as the builder and owner of the property.

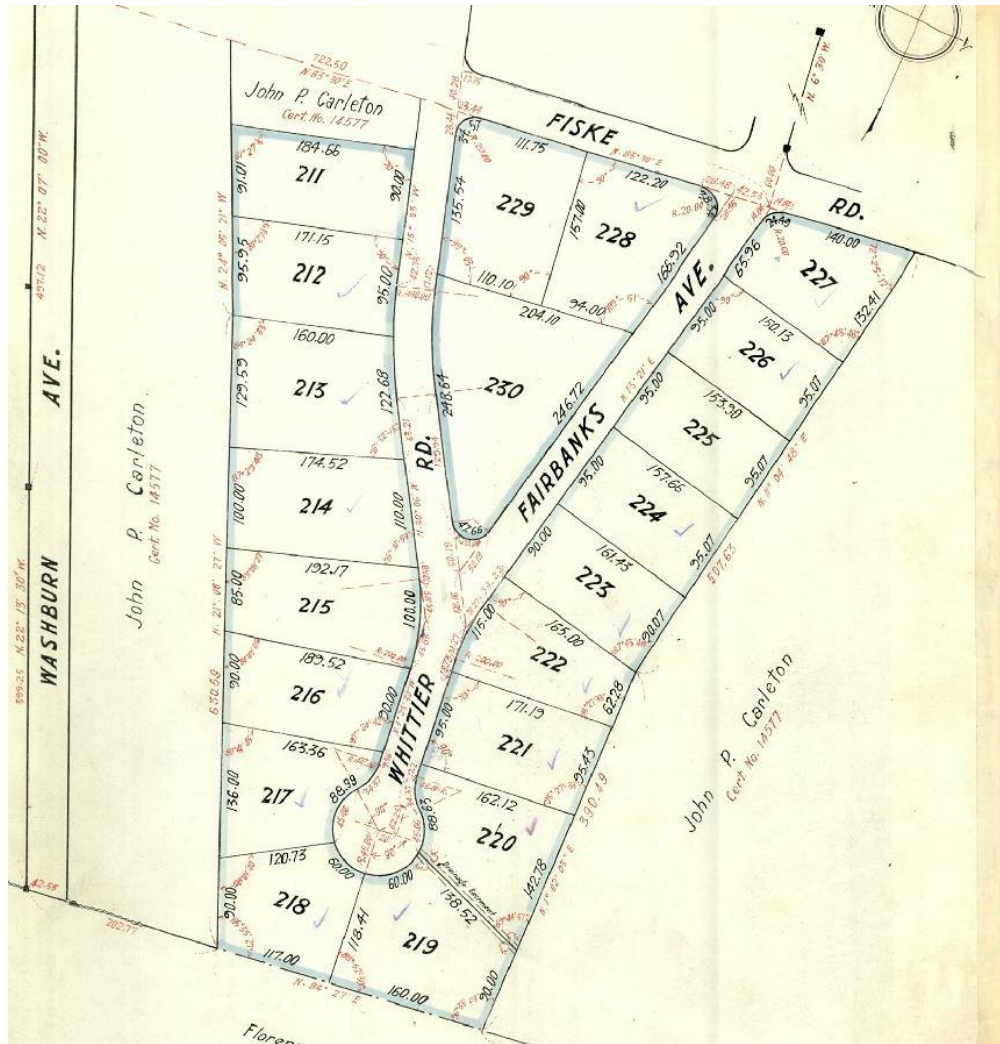


Figure 1. Whittier Road and Fairbanks Avenue, Plan Courtesy of Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

The property was sold to Patrick Maloney in 1933. Mr. Maloney was originally from Ireland and as a Wellesley resident he was a member of the Knights of Columbus. It was then sold soon after to his son Joseph and Virginia Maloney in 1940. Except for a few deed corrections, the house continued to be under ownership of the family. In 1986, the house was transferred to Joseph Maloney's daughters, Virginia Lee and Jo Ellen Toussaint. The current owner is the estate of Jo Ellen Toussaint.



Figure 2. Neighborhood Context

The dwelling is a 2-story frame dwelling with an asymmetrical front facade, minimally altered. Staff believes the original architecture of the house is best characterized as a modest Tudor influenced. The style is characterized by steep pitched roofs, large chimneys and narrow windows with multi-pane glazing. This particular example has a simple round-arched doorway, brick and wood siding and multi-pane glazing.

The Longfellow Estates development is a well-preserved neighborhood. Mostly in part due to building restrictions, imparted by the original developers, which limited the cost of construction, car garages per lot size, and setbacks. Due to its suburban appeal, most of the first residents of this neighborhood were professionals commuting to Boston. See Figure 2 & 3.



Figure 3. Longfellow Estates Advertisement, Courtesy of Wellesley Townsman, November 26, 1926

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** (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 construction method and style of the dwelling is architecturally important by reason of period and style. The building is an important example of Tudor influenced architecture in the neighborhood. In addition, the potential demolition of the house at 84 Whittier would be a detriment to the character of the immediate group of buildings and the rest of the original Longfellow Estates that has remained of similar scale and architecture.

Therefore, based upon the above, **Staff is of the opinion that demolition of the subject building would be detrimental to the historic or architectural heritage of the Town and recommends that the Historical Commission determine that the building be deemed Preferably Preserved.**