

STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2019-07– 72 Woodcliff Road - Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 72 Woodcliff Road (Assessor's Parcel ID #29-22)
Applicant: Matthew Smith
Property Owner: Jill and Matthew Smith
Date: Report prepared 3/7/2019 for 3/11/2019 Historical Commission Meeting
Staff Contact: Claudia Zarazua, Planner
Staff Recommendation: **Preferably Preserved**

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Application for Eligibility Notice was submitted on February 6, 2019 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 February 8, 2019 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. An application for Preservation Determination was submitted on February 12, 2019. A public hearing before the Historical Commission was scheduled for March 11, 2019.

DESCRIPTION

In consideration of the application for Eligibility Notice, it was determined that the building was constructed no earlier than October 10, 1945 when the building permit "8607, 8608" for a dwelling was issued. The land was originally owned by Albion Clapp. Certain parcels of land, including this property, were purchased by Haynes and Hernandez in 1930-1935. See Figure 1.

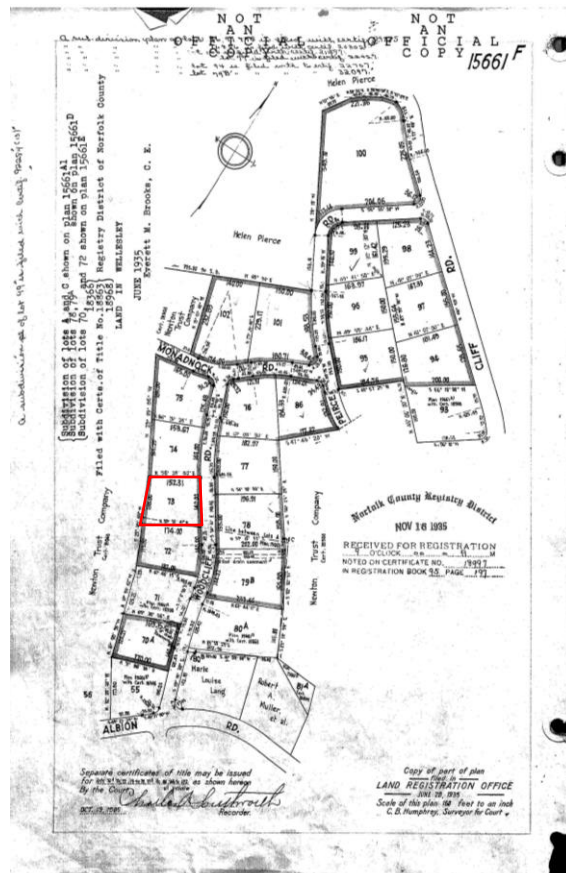


Figure 1. Subdivision Plan, 1935, Plan Courtesy of Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

According to building permit records, George Haynes, of Haynes and Hernandez, built the house. Mr. and Mrs. Haynes resided at this address until 1948. That same year, the house was acquired by Frank and Susan B. Howes. Mrs. Howes was a graduate of Mills College and Mr. Howes was a salesman for the Howes Leather Company. The house was later sold to Hazel and Edmund Twomey in 1952. Mr. Twomey was a solicitor for the city of Cambridge and a lawyer for Blue Cross Blue Shield. The property was acquired by Audrey and William Dole in 1967. Mr. Dole was the president of Dole Publishing Company, which at the time published Watertown Press, Cambridge Chronicle and Somerville Press. The property was acquired by Debbie and Michael Thornton in 1984. Mrs. Thornton was a member of the Hills Garden Club. The house was later sold to Deborah Davis in 1999, who later placed the property in the 72 Woodcliff Road Trust. The property was acquired in 2004 by the current owners, Jill and Matthew Smith.

The dwelling is a two-story building with side-gabled roof, not significantly altered since its construction. It has a two-car garage accessed from the rear. In 1982, a second floor addition was built over an existing porch. Staff believes the architecture of the house is best characterized as Colonial Revival with elements representative of such style like small-paned windows, shutters, and heavy window frames, as well as a large central chimney. The siding is perceived to be wood cladding. The overall condition of the existing house is above average.

The applicant previously submitted plans for partial demolition that were under the 50% threshold. The applicant is now pursuing a full demolition.

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.

With respect to standard (ii), Staff believes that the publically visible facades of the dwelling are original in their form, and the dwelling is consistent with the period and scale of the majority of the homes in the immediate neighborhood. While perhaps more architecturally important by itself, Staff is of the opinion that the dwelling is also architecturally important in the context of the neighborhood.

With respect to standard (i), Staff is of the opinion that the association to William “Bill” Dole, a major newspaper publisher in Massachusetts, contributes to the history of Wellesley.

Therefore, based upon the above, **Staff is of the opinion that demolition of the subject building would be detrimental to the historic or architectural landscape of**

the Town and recommends that the Historical Commission determine that the building be deemed Preferably Preserved.