



STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2019-22 35 Clifford Street- Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 35 Clifford Street (Assessor's Parcel ID # 88-3)
Applicant: James Tau
Property Owner: James Tau and Laura Thomson
Date: Report prepared 4/30/2019 for 5/15/2019 Historical Commission Meeting
Staff Contact: Claudia Zarazua, Planner
Staff Recommendation: **Preferably Preserved**

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Applications for Eligibility Notice and Preservation Determination were submitted on April 4, 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 April 8, 2019 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. A public hearing before the Historical Commission is scheduled for May 15, 2019.

DESCRIPTION

In consideration of the application for Eligibility Notice, it was determined that the dwelling was originally constructed no later than 1916 when a house was first reported as built on this address under ownership of Gaetano Messieri. According to a report from 1983 written by Jean Berry, the original location of the house was in the former Sunshine Dairy and moved to this location in 1915. The report further explains that the approximate date of construction is 1867.

Gaetano Messieri acquired the parcel of land from James and Mary Meehan in 1916. The original lot was created in 1841 when Dan Ayer, a local developer, bought a large plot of land and subdivided it. (See Figure 1). The property was acquired by Bruna Alberghini in 1964. After the death of Mrs. Alberghini, her estate sold the property to Maria and Cyril Rakhmanoff in 1989. The house was later sold to John Kendall and Melissa Arronte in 2002. The current owners acquired the property in late 2018.



Figure 1. Plan of Land belonging to Dan Iyer, 1853, Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

According to building permit records, the following modifications have been made: a second floor addition in 1975, new windows and insulation in 1990, roof repairs in 1991, new dormers in room over garage in 1997, and a significant 2-story addition in 2005.

The dwelling is a two-story house with two dormers. Remnants of the typical wrap around porch are still visible although it is now completely enclosed. Staff believes the original architecture of the house is best characterized as part of the National family with significant additions but minimal modifications to the front facade.

The house is a nonconforming structure and sits on a conforming lot of 10,535 square feet. The building is sited on the southern side of the property and the driveway is located along the southern property line. (See Figure 2).

construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings, but that the 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.

With respect to standard (i), Staff is of the opinion that the existing dwelling is significant because it is importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town. This building is one of the remaining structures representative of the original Italian immigrant neighborhood. Directly abutting this property is The Reliance Club, on 33 Clifford, that housed the first “Italian Men’s Club” in Wellesley. According to an article from the Townsman, the club was created in 1918 with the purpose of providing educational and social activities for Italian families. According to former owners of the property, the subject property often served as an overflow venue for the many social engagements of the Reliance Club. The neighborhood was a typical working-class enclave composed of builders, carpenters, masons, cobblers, bakers, and gardeners. According to a 1980 letter from the Wellesley Historical Commission, gardeners from the neighborhood were hired by Walter Hunnewell for the design and maintenance of his Italian Gardens.

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. Staff believes that the most publically visible facade of the dwelling is original in its form and consistent with the period and style of the original neighborhood.

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

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	WEL.381
Historic Name:	Fitch, Thomas House
Common Name:	
Address:	35 Clifford St
City/Town:	Wellesley
Village/Neighborhood:	Wellesley
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	c 1865
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	No style
Use(s):	Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Vinyl Siding



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

The MACRIS database and scanned files are highly dynamic; new information is added daily and both database records and related scanned files may be updated as new information is incorporated into MHC files. Users should note that there may be a considerable lag time between the receipt of new or updated records by MHC and the appearance of related information in MACRIS. Users should also note that not all source materials for the MACRIS database are made available as scanned images. Users may consult the records, files and maps available in MHC's public research area at its offices at the State Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, open M-F, 9-5.

Users of this digital material acknowledge that they have read and understood the MACRIS Information and Disclaimer (<http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm>)

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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FORM B - BUILDING

AREA	FORM NO.
	381

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108



town Wellesley

Address 35 Clifford Street

Historic Name Fitch-Messieri House

Use: Present residence

Original same

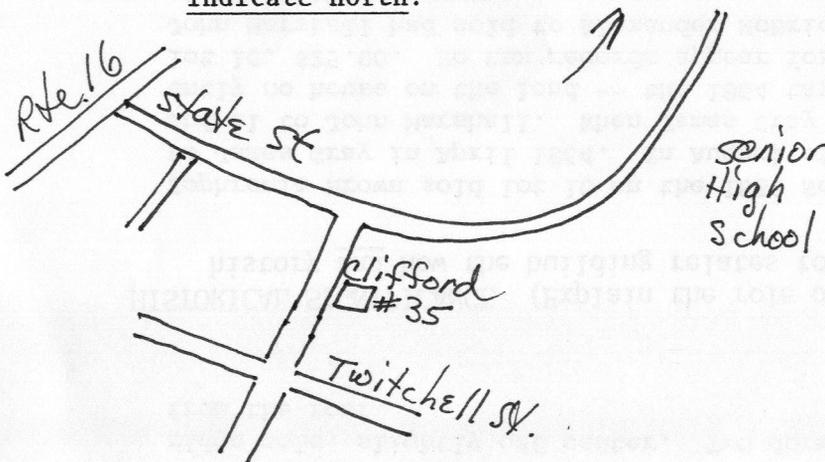
DESCRIPTION:

Date c. 1865

Source tax records/deeds

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.



Style 1 1/2 story "farmhouse"

Architect _____

Exterior wall fabric clapboard siding

Outbuildings garage

Major alterations (with dates) _____

porch, 20th century

Moved Yes Date c. 1915

Approx. acreage 10,535'

Setting Clifford is a quiet street, with residences, in the center of Wellesley. Most other homes are a good bit newer than # 35.

Recorded by Jean N. Berry

Organization Wellesley Historical Comm.

Date May 1983

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

Like so many of Wellesley's early houses, this one has retained its simplicity, but has been altered to accommodate modern living. The enclosed front porch is of this century, and the siding is new. The chimney remains behind the ridge pole, slightly off center. Two dormers, each with two windows, project from the roof.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

Sophonria Brown sold lot 10 on the 1853 Seth Davis plan of land in Wellesley to James Gray in April 1864. In August of that year James Gray sold lot 10 and 11 to John Marshall. When James Gray bought from Brown, there was apparently no house on the land -- the 1864 tax assessment against Brown was for lot 10, \$25.00. No tax records appear for 1865-1867, but in 1868 we note that John Marshall had sold to Alexander McBride and that a house valued at \$650 stood on the property. McBride had bought in March of 1867, for \$800, with "buildings thereon," land at the corner of Washington & State Streets.

McBride retained the property until April, 1874, when he sold to Thomas Fitch of Grantville. The Fitch family held the house and land until about 1915. At that time it was moved to its present location at 35 Clifford Street. Its former site was occupied by an early version of the later Sunshine Dairy (now razed). Building Department records show that in 1939 a permit was given to Sunshine Dairy to tear down a small store. The replacement remained until the 1970's.

The house at its new location was owned by Gaetano and Mary Messieri. In 1964 widower Messieri sold to Arrigo and Bruna Alberghini.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

Norfolk County Registry of Deeds.
 Wellesley Assessor's Records.
 Wellesley Building Department files.
 Research by Margaret R. Brown, Margaret S. Urann.
 Maps of Wellesley: 1897, 1888, 1876; 1910, 1915.