



## STAFF REPORT

### Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

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Application: DR-2019-23– 40 Old Farm Road - Preservation Determination  
Subject Property: 40 Old Farm Road (Assessor's Parcel ID #83-38)  
Applicant: Bobby and Vaneeta Sheth  
Property Owner: Bobby and Vaneeta Sheth  
Date: Report prepared 5/13/2019 for 5/15/2019 Historical Commission Meeting  
Staff Contact: Claudia Zarazua, Planner  
Staff Recommendation: **Preferably Preserved**

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#### APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Application for Eligibility Notice was submitted on April 9, 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 11, 2019 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. An application for Preservation Determination was submitted on April 15, 2019. A public hearing before the Historical Commission was scheduled for May 15, 2019.

#### DESCRIPTION

In consideration of the application for Eligibility Notice, it was determined that the building was constructed no earlier than December 18, 1935 when the building permit "5104" for a dwelling was issued. The land was originally owned by Louville Niles. See Figure 1.



Figure 1. Louville Niles, 1935, Plan Recorded at Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

According to deed records, Oldfarm Homesteads (Niles family) was the original developer of the land. The property was acquired by Edward and Nancy Earle in 1936. Mr. Earle was a lawyer, member of the Wellesley Club, and an active member of the community. The house was later sold to Albert and Eleanor Sullivan in 1965, who later placed the property in the Eleanor Sullivan Trust. The property was acquired in 2019 by the current owners, Bobby and Vaneeta Sheth.

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 left side. A two story addition was built to the left side of the property. 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 average with some visible paint damage on the siding.

## 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 not as architecturally important by itself, Staff is of the opinion that the dwelling is mostly architecturally important in the context of the neighborhood and the development of the area.

With respect to standard (i), Staff is of the opinion that the association to Louville Niles, a major developer and builder in Wellesley, contributes to the history of the town.

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.**