



STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2019-60– 52 Valley Road - Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 52 Valley Road (Assessor's Parcel ID #83-3)
Applicant: Hundred One LLC
Property Owner: Hundred One LLC
Date: Report prepared 5/14/2019 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 11, 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 16, 2019 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. 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 August 19, 1929 when the building permit "3303" for a dwelling and garage was issued. The property was originally part of the Louville Niles Estates subdivision. See Figure 1.



Figure 1. Louville Niles Estate, of Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

The property was built for Marion H. Niles, Mr. Niles' daughter. Ms. Niles was president of the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association and continued to lead the town's efforts in providing social services. It was then sold to Marion and Paul Rice in 1940. An additional parcel of 444 sq. ft. was sold to them in 1958. The deed had extensive building restrictions and it can be inferred that neighborhood character was of utmost significance to the Niles family. The deed attributed to Marion Niles list restrictions such as 60 feet setbacks, land use, landscaping, screening, and footprint dimensions. Mr. Rice was the vice president of the New England Coal and Coke Company. The property was sold to Keneth and Lucile Michel in 1958. Mr. Michel was a vice president of the Bradley Sun Division of American Can Company. The house was then sold to Louise and Aldo De Simone in 1961. The property was sold to William and Joan Meyer in 1968. The house was later acquired by Joan Williams in 1971. The property was then sold to Dusan and Anna Dobnik in 1972. The house was later acquired by Charles Rosenberg in 2000. The current owner, Hundred One LLC, acquired the property in 2017.

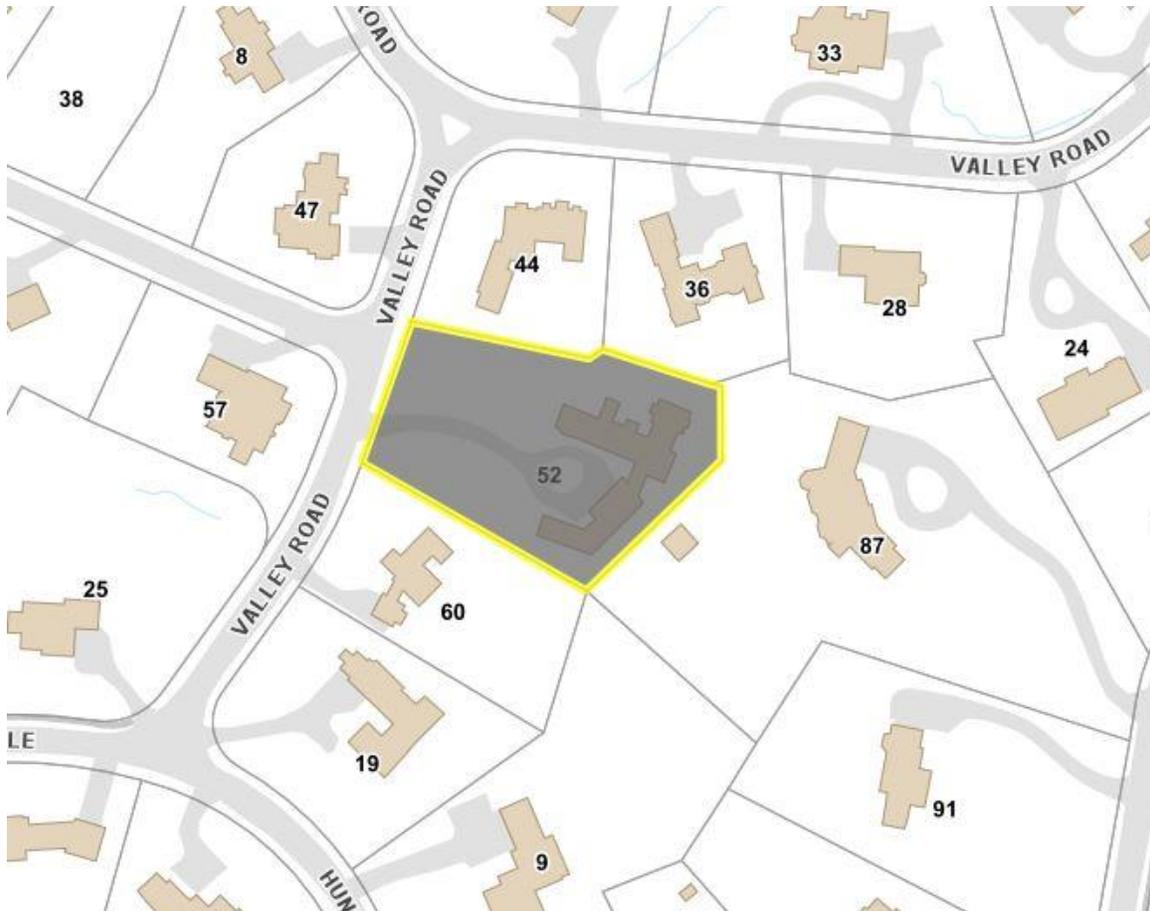


Figure 2. Neighborhood Context

The dwelling is a 2-story frame dwelling with a prominent dormer, and has been significantly but complementary altered. It has a three car garage and several additions, mostly concentrated to the left side of the original home. 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 front porch, brick and stucco siding and multi-pane glazing.

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 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 this house would be a detriment to the character of the immediate group of buildings and the rest of the neighborhood that has remained of similar scale and architecture.

With respect to standard (i), Staff is of the opinion that association to the Niles family is significant to the development of Wellesley. Harold L. Niles, brother of Ms. Niles, was chairman of the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board.

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