

STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2019-53 – 4 Larch Road – Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 4 Larch Road (Assessor's Parcel ID # 148-40)
Applicant: Jose & Aida Martinez
Property Owner: Jose & Aida Martinez
Date: Report prepared 11/13/2019 for 11/18/2019 Historical Commission Meeting
Staff Contact: Dana Marks, Planner
Staff Recommendation: **Not Preferably Preserved**

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Applications for Eligibility Notice and Preservation Determination were submitted on October 1, 2019 indicating the intent to demolish, in its entirety, a building located on the property and used as a dwelling. A public hearing before the Historical Commission is scheduled for November 18, 2019.

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 when a 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.

DESCRIPTION

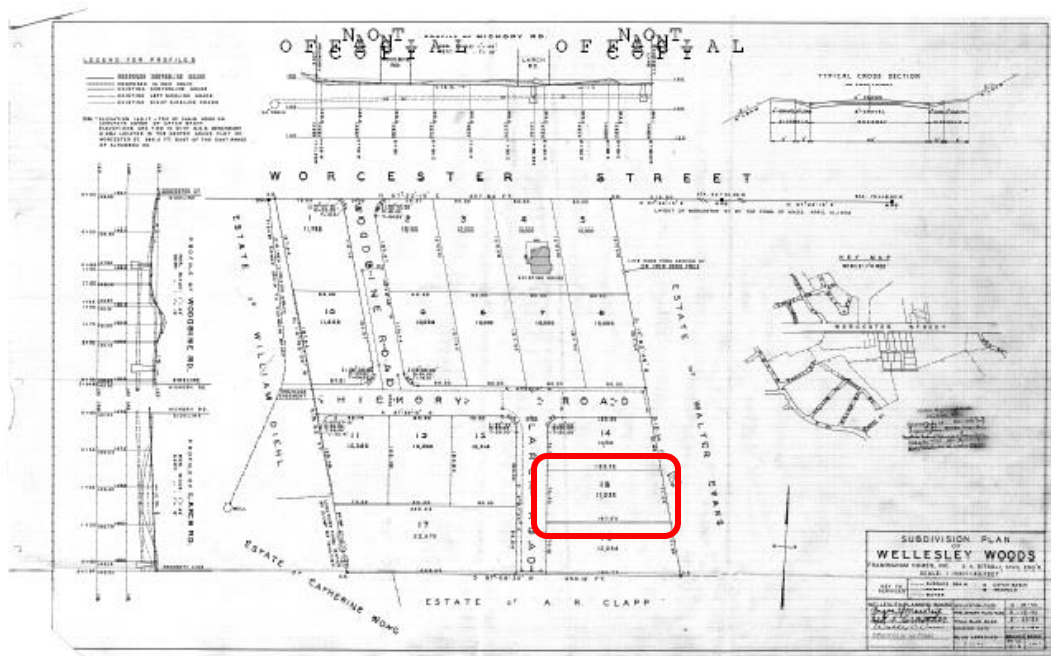
In consideration of the application for a full/complete demolition and in determining whether or not the dwelling should be deemed Preferably Preserved, it was determined that the original dwelling was constructed no earlier than March 7, 1946, when Building Permit 8743 was filed for a “dwelling.” This source proves that the dwelling at 4 Larch Road is indeed Eligible and subject to a Preservation Determination pursuant to Article 46C of the Wellesley Town Bylaws.

The wood frame dwelling has a side gable roof and is built in a very simple Colonial Revival style. It is clad in yellow clapboard siding and has a red brick chimney on the left (north) side of the dwelling. There are three evenly-spaced windows on the second floor of the front (west) façade. The front entry door is located on the left side of the front façade underneath the leftmost second-floor window. A small window is immediately to the right of the front door. The other front-facing window on the first floor is directly below the rightmost second-floor window, and appears to be identical to the three above. A rear addition was built on the back of the dwelling in 1974 (Building Permit 17335), and a detached garage was built in the same year as the main house (Building Permit 8749).



Image from Assessor's Property Record Card.

Before this dwelling was constructed, Framingham Homes, Inc., purchased two land parcels that included the lot where 4 Larch Road now sits (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2299, Page 310). Framingham Homes was responsible for subdividing the surrounding area into 17 lots known as Wellesley Woods. Other developments in Framingham Homes' portfolio included Lakewood-in-Natick on Lake Cochituate in Natick, Colonial Village in Framingham, and Wellesley Gardens in Wellesley. The "Subdivision Plan of Wellesley Woods," dated May 31, 1940, shows 17 lots with an existing house on Lot 4. Lot 15 is the location of where the dwelling on Larch Road was built later in the decade (see below).



The location of 4 Larch Road is Lot 15 and is outlined in red. Plan from Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Map Book D2288, Page 475.

Two years later in 1942, F. Diehl & Son, Inc., purchased Lots 2-8 and 12-17 from Framingham Homes, Inc. (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2393, Page 442). There was no house present on Lot 15 in 1946 when Bradford C. Farnham purchased it in February (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2589, Page 177). The dwelling at 4 Larch Road was constructed under the ownership of Farnham, as advertised in the *Wellesley Townsman*: “As required by the Zoning By-Law, notice is hereby given that the following permits have been applied for: Bradford C. Farnham, 4 Larch Road, Build Dwelling.”¹ Farnham employed architect Gustav A. Hagen to design the house, and was responsible for building the house and garage (Building Permits 8743 & 8749).

Around the same time Farnham purchased 4 Larch Road and built a dwelling there, the *Townsman* reported, “Come spring Mr. Farnham plans to open a development and start building 35 homes in the section known as Wellesley Woods starting at the corner of Woodbine and Hickory roads.”² Based on building permit notices in the *Townsman*, Farnham also built houses at 7 Crown Ridge Road; 7 and 2 Hickory Road; 1, 6, 10, 15, and 22 Larch Road; and 784 Worcester Street. Farnham’s Wellesley Woods development project was planned as an all-veteran development project, employing Hagen as the architect and local carpenter Benjamin Selfridge.³ While 4 Larch Road was constructed as part of Farnham’s Wellesley Woods, very few structures remain in whole or in part from the original development.

In June of 1946, Louise L. Pillivant bought the property, “with the buildings thereon.” (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2611, Page 442). The following year, Pillivant transferred the property to Howard V. Foulke, acting as Trustee for the benefit of Garrett A. & Ann Pillivant

¹ Building Inspector, “BUILDING PERMITS,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 2/28/1946, page 4.

² “Many Obstacles Facing Builders Of New Homes,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 11/8/1945, page 2.

³ “Wellesley Woods Development Is The Only All-Veteran Housing Project Now Under Way In The Wellesleys,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 5/23/1946, page 8.

(Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2671, Page 184). The property transferred again in 1948 from Foulke to Clarence H. & Mildred W. Waldo (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2775, Page 247). Mildred Waldo sold the property to John P. Birrell & Doris C. Anderson as joint tenants in 1955 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3395, Page 121). At the time of this sale, the *Townsmen* described the house as “a 6 room Colonial at 4 Larch road. There is a fireplace living room, dining room, open patio and kitchen on the first floor and 3 bedrooms and bath on the second. With one-car garage, the house is on 11,235 square feet of land.”⁴

Thomas G. & Kathleen M. Cody purchased 4 Larch Road in 1959 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3737, Page 164). In 1962 Gene W. & Bonnie J. Dalton purchased the property (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3996, Page 368). After living there for four years, the Daltons moved to Arlington Road in January 1968.⁵ The Daltons sold the property to Albert R. & Louisa P. Pieper, Jr. (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 4490, Page 43).

In 1972 Stephen C. & Elizabeth G. Morris purchased 4 Larch Road (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 4836, Page 294). Under their ownership, they added a one-story, 10' x 24' addition to the rear of the house in 1974 (Building Permit 17335). In 1978 John C. & Mary Beth Owens acquired 4 Larch Road, and sold the property to E. Eric & Patricia N. Adams the following year (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds: Book 5481, Page 536; Book 5669, Page 308).

A real estate listing in 1987 advertised for an open house at 4 Larch Road, boasting an “exceptionally pretty 3 bedroom red clapboard Colonial on tree-line[d] street with first floor den, deck & lovely grounds.”⁶ From this listing, John P. & Gery Smith McKenna purchased the property that year (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 7700, Page 33). The listing also demonstrates that the color of the house has changed over time. Three years later the McKennas sold the property to Thomas Y. & Martha Baldwin in 1990 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 8800, Page 459).

Ronald & Lauren Karp Kinghorn purchased 4 Larch Road in 1996 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 11751, Page 373). The following year, the Kinghorns renovated the first floor bathroom and kitchen (Building Permit OTHR-1997-48). In 2002 the Kinghorns sold the property to T. Michael & Katharine G. Brock (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 16984, Page 2). The Brocks installed two windows on each side of the fireplace in 2004 (Building Permit RES-04-213). In 2006 Jennifer M. Hartwell & Brian J. Carnes purchased the property as joint tenants with the right of survivorship (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 23729, Page 208). Hartwell & Carnes installed 11 new prime windows without any structural changes in 2009 (Building Permit RES-09-105). The current owners acquired the property in 2014 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 32078, Page 147).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is of the opinion that the subject building at 4 Larch Road **is not** (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, **is not** (ii) historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style,

⁴ “Recent Hill And Company Sales,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 8/25/1955, page 9.

⁵ “Neighborhood News,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 1/25/1968, page 12.

⁶ “OPEN HOUSES,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 5/14/1987, page 33.

method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings, and **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), Bradford C. Farnham and Gustav A. Hagen were involved in the original construction of 4 Larch Road as owner/builder and architect respectively. Hagen was an architect from Newtonville, Massachusetts, and worked with Farnham on a number of building projects around Wellesley. Farnham was responsible for developing much of the Wellesley Woods neighborhood where the property is located, however little of the neighborhood’s original character remains.

Therefore, based upon the above, **Staff is of the opinion that the demolition of the subject building would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage of the Town and thus Staff recommends that the building should not be deemed Preferably Preserved.**