



## **STAFF REPORT**

### **Town of Wellesley - Planning Department**

---

Application: DR-2019-57 – 25 Leewood Road – Preservation Determination  
Subject Property: 25 Leewood Road (Assessor's Parcel ID # 191-31)  
Applicant: Gary Lesanto  
Property Owner: Mary Lisa Sisson, Estate of Frances McDonnell  
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 21, 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 October 22, 2019 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. 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.”

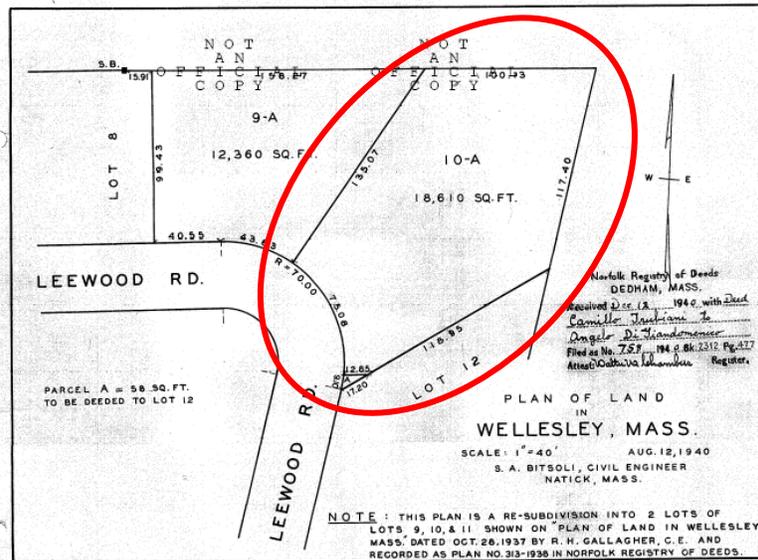
If the Commission determines that the Building should be Preferably Preserved, then no Demolition Permit with respect to such Building shall be issued until twelve (12) months after the date of the Preservation Determination.

#### **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 October 17, 1940, when Building Permit 7441 was filed for a “Dwelling.” This source proves that the dwelling at 25 Leewood Road is indeed Eligible

and subject to a Preservation Determination pursuant to Article 46C of the Wellesley Town Bylaws.

The dwelling at 25 Leewood Road sits on an 18,610 square-foot lot on the northeast curve of said road. The lot is known as 10-A and shown in the following “Plan of Land in Wellesley, Mass.” from August 12, 1940.



*Lot of 25 Leewood Road circled in red on the Plan of Land in Wellesley, Mass. By S.A. Bitsoli, Civil Engineer  
(Recorded in the Norfolk Country Registry of Deeds, Book 2312, Page 477).*

This wood-frame Cape Cod style dwelling has an asymmetrical cross-gabled roof and is clad with light blue shingle siding. White trim surrounds its window, door, and garage openings. Dark blue shutters frame the windows on the front side of the house. The following photos are provided by the applicant.



*Front Elevation.*



*Right Elevation.*



Left Elevation.



Rear Elevation.

The surrounding neighborhood today has a mix of Cape Cod cottages and a number of larger new construction. The newer homes do not diminish the older dwellings, nor substantially detract from maintaining a homogenous neighborhood appearance.

Angelo DiGiandomenico and Camillo Trubiani, builders of the dwelling at 25 Leewood Road, acquired this lot from Joseph Goodman in 1940 along with three others along Leewood Road (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2290, Page 126). DiGiandomenico and Trubiani worked with architect Maurice Abramovitz to construct the dwelling after being issued Building Permit 7441 on October 17, 1940. Trubiani sold his stake in the property later in 1940, making DiGiandomenico the sole owner (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2313, Page 477).

In 1941, DiGiandomenico sold the property and dwelling to William E. & Helen J. Aldrich (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2317, Page 422). Mr. Aldrich was an advertising manager for the Boston-based H.A. Johnson Company food supply firm for 20 years, and a member of the Wellesley Masonic Lodge and the Advertising Club of Boston. After his sudden passing at the age of 46 in 1950,<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Aldrich remained the owner of 25 Leewood Road for the following eight years.

Helen J. Rule, the former Mrs. Aldrich, sold the property in 1958 to Dorothea Ohmart (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3662, Page 24). A longtime resident of Wellesley, Ohmart served in the WAVES during World War II as a librarian, first at the Aeronautical Library of the Naval Air Station in Patuxent, Maryland, and then for the War Department in Germany. After returning to Wellesley, she joined the staff of the Wellesley Free Library.<sup>2</sup>

Acting as the Executor of the will of Dorothea R. Ohmart, Leslie M. Ohmart, Jr. sold the property at 25 Leewood Road to Nancy L. Hampton in 1975 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 5151, Page 143). Nancy H. Kraft, the former Nancy L. Hampton, transferred the property to Frances McDonnell in 1977 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 5402, Page 160). McDonnell was the public relations manager for the Massachusetts State Lottery.<sup>3</sup> The Estate of Frances McDonnell still owns the property today, and Mary Lisa Sisson acts as the Estate's Personal Representative. The Applicant, Gary Lesanto, was appointed Sisson's authorized agent and representative.

---

<sup>1</sup> "William Earle Aldrich Died Suddenly Monday," *Wellesley Townsman*, 10/26/1950, page 2.

<sup>2</sup> "[Ohmart] Joins Staff Of Wellesley Library," *Wellesley Townsman*, 3/22/1951.

<sup>3</sup> Deborah Deely, "For Frances McDonnell, Mass. Lottery job is just the ticket," *Wellesley Townsman*, 11/9/1989, page 27.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff is of the opinion that the subject building at 25 Leewood 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, 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.”

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.**