



## STAFF REPORT

### Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

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Application: DR-2019-63 – 139 Overbrook Drive – Preservation Determination  
Subject Property: 139 Overbrook Drive (Assessor's Parcel ID # 203-66)  
Applicant: Denise Canzano  
Property Owner: Denise Canzano  
Date: Report prepared 12/11/2019 for 12/16/2019 Historical Commission Meeting  
Staff Contact: Dana Marks, Planner  
Staff Recommendation: **Not Preferably Preserved**

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#### APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Applications for Eligibility Notice and Preservation Determination were submitted on November 20, 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 November 22, 2019 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. A public hearing before the Historical Commission is scheduled for December 16, 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 June 13, 1921, when Building Permit 784 was granted

to E. Monroe for a “dwelling.”<sup>1</sup> This source proves that the dwelling at 139 Overbrook Drive is indeed Eligible and subject to a Preservation Determination pursuant to Article 46C of the Wellesley Town Bylaws.

Located to the southeast of the juncture of Ingleside Road, Manor Avenue, and Overbrook Drive, 139 Overbrook Drive is a simple one and one-half story dwelling of wood frame construction designed in the Old Style and clad in white vinyl siding.<sup>2</sup> The structure has a front gable roof, a bright red front door in the center, and windows framed by inoperable black shutters. A detached garage is located towards the rear of the property, and was significantly altered in 1964 (Building Permit 14963). A deck on the rear of the house was further altered by the most recent previous owners in 2005 (Building Permit 36379 [RES-05-97]).



*Image via Assessor's Property Record Card.*

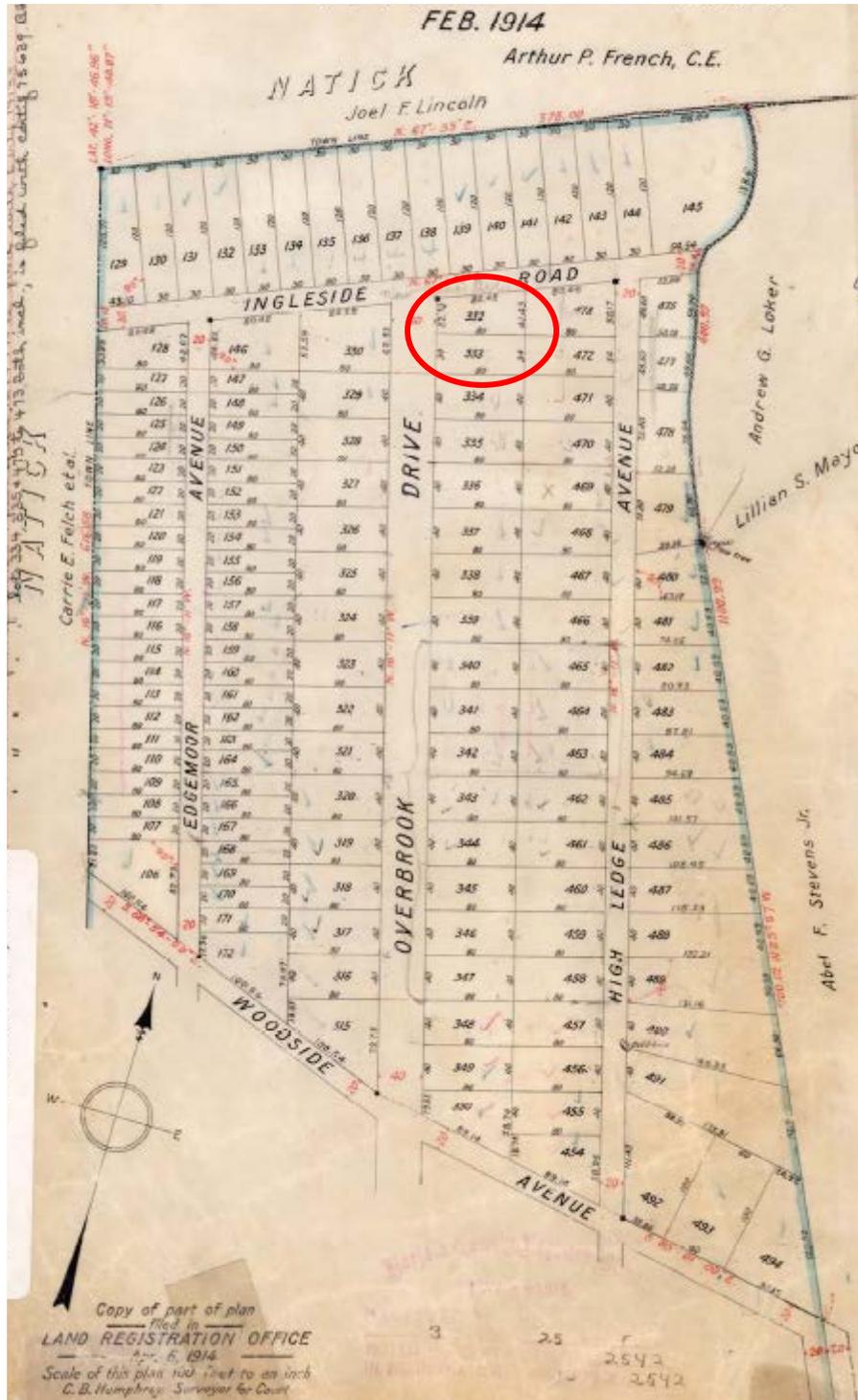
The area in which this dwelling is situated was once part of a large estate owned by Frederick Reed (Norfolk Land Court Registry District, Certificate of Title 2542), who moved to Wellesley from Washington, DC when he was appointed headmaster of the Boston Latin School. Reed's estate was known as “Overbrook,” and was located in the northwest corner of the Town. After adopting a new life philosophy aligned with the Spirit Fruit Society, Reed's estate became a haven for other followers. Following another change in life philosophy, Reed relocated to southern California and subdivided his estate, laying out streets named after its natural features.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Monroe was credited with being one of the first to build in this section of Town. “MANOR NOTES,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 8/10/1928, page 4.

<sup>2</sup> Construction, style, and material information provided via Assessor's Property Card.

<sup>3</sup> “The odd story of the Spirit Fruit Society and the origins of Overbrook,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 1/22/2015.



Map depicting a portion of Reed's Overbrook estate. 139 Overbrook Drive is located in a portion of Lots 332 and 333, in red, which was further subdivided in 1922. (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Land Court Plan 4252<sup>B</sup>)



Map depicting the further subdivision of Lots 332 and 333. While not a true corner lot, 139 Overbrook Drive is located on a portion of this area. (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Land Court Plan 4252<sup>D</sup>; overlay of 139 Overbrook Drive as seen today via Assessor's Map)

Edmund V. Lynch acquired the property from Reed in 1922 (Norfolk Land Court Registry District, Certificates of Title 5941 and 6168) and oversaw alterations to the dwelling (Building Permit 1013). After Lynch's death and acting as the Administratrix of his estate, Mary A. Lynch granted the property to Thomas M. Smith in 1929 (Norfolk Land Court Registry District, Certificate of Title 12622).

Following the sale to Mr. Smith, a number of mortgages, foreclosures, and sales of real estate due to breaches in such mortgages ensued, and the property jumped between owners and the Waltham Co-operative Bank, later known as the Waltham Federal Savings and Loan Association. During this time, it was reported in the *Wellesley Townsman*, "Mr. E. Newcombe

has bought the house on Overbrook Drive formerly owned by Mr. E. Lynch”<sup>4</sup> in 1931, and an “Edward L. Newcome” resided there in 1934.

In 1939, Gaetano and Gladys J. D’Agostino acquired the property from Joseph S. Driscoll (Norfolk Land Court Registry District, Certificate of Title 23809). The D’Agostinos sold the property to Charles E. and Cecilia Corkum in 1944 (Norfolk Land Court Registry District, Document 97151-1). Charles was employed by Wellesley College for over 25 years.<sup>5</sup> Later in 1944, the Corkums sold the property to Lewis W. and Isabelle C. Meyer (Norfolk Land Court Registry District, Certificate of Title 30582). Mr. Meyer was involved with the Wellesley Square Garage for over twenty years, and was promoted to proprietor in 1938.<sup>6</sup> The Garage was located at 8 Spring Street in the rear of the Wellesley Post Office Building, and was the oldest garage in town.<sup>7</sup> It was also under the ownership of the Meyers that the garage at 139 Overbrook Drive was altered according to Building Permit 14936: “Tear down two sections of existing 3-car garage – one section to remain.”

In 1968 Michael J. and Cloretta L. Rodgers acquired 139 Overbrook Drive, and held the title to the property for 36 years (Norfolk Land Court Registry District, Certificate of Title 85478). Previous owners Laxmiprasad Putta and Teja Potineni acquired the property in 2004 (Norfolk Land Court Registry District, Document 1025915-1). The current owner purchased the property in 2009 (Norfolk Land Court Registry District, Document 1187439-1).

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff is of the opinion that the subject building at 139 Overbrook Drive **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.

With respect to standard (i), Frederick Reed once owned a large estate known as Overbrook, encompassing a large area in the northwest corner of the Town where 139 Overbrook Drive is situated. However, Reed’s former estate home does not sit on this property, nor was he responsible for building many of the dwellings within the subdivision of his former estate.

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.**

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<sup>4</sup> “OVERBROOK LOCAL NEWS,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 3/6/1931, page 3.

<sup>5</sup> “Christmas Party For Wellesley College Employees,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 12/16/1954, page 3.

<sup>6</sup> “Popular Business Man Manager Of Local Garage,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 5/6/1938, page 14.

<sup>7</sup> “Tire And Battery Road Service At We. Sq. Garage,” *Wellesley Townsman*, 5/17/1940, page 7.