



## STAFF REPORT

### Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

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Application: DR-2019-72 – 44 Sabrina Road – Preservation Determination  
Subject Property: 44 Sabrina Road (Assessor's Parcel ID # 115-18)  
Applicant: David Silverstein  
Property Owner: 44 Sabrina Road LLC  
Date: Report prepared 2/5/2020 for 2/10/2020 Historical Commission Meeting  
Staff Contact: Dana Marks, Planner  
Staff Recommendation: **Not Preferably Preserved**

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#### APPLICATION OVERVIEW

On December 27, 2019, the Applicant submitted applications for Eligibility Notice and Preservation Determination 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 December 31, 2019 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. The Historical Commission will hold a public hearing on the application for a Preservation Determination on February 10, 2020.

#### 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 later than 1947, when it was reported, "Newcomers to Wellesley are Mr. and Mrs. Roy D. Champion who have recently moved into their newly built home at 44 Sabrina road."<sup>1</sup> This source proves that the dwelling at 44 Sabrina Road is indeed Eligible and subject to a Preservation Determination pursuant to Article 46C of the Wellesley Town Bylaws.

44 Sabrina Road is sited on an undersized lot (20,028 sq. ft.) within a Single Residence 40 District. It is built in a simple Colonial Revival style with a side gable roof and a central chimney. Two stories tall, the wood-frame house is clad in yellow siding and has a centrally located front door.

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<sup>1</sup> "Newcomers to Wellesley," *Wellesley Townsman*, February 2, 1947, page 17.



Image via Google Maps.

Virginia C. Champion purchased the property from the Home Savings Bank in May 1946 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2609, Page 201). Later that year, Virginia and her husband Roy applied for a building permit to build a “Dwelling and Garage” at 44 Sabrina Road.<sup>2</sup> Their family had moved into their newly built home by February 1946. Roy Champion was in charge of surgical supplies for the Bauer and Black Company of Boston and served in the U.S. Navy for six months.<sup>3</sup>

In 1950 the Champions sold 44 Sabrina Road to Edward and Eunice Howard (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Page 2965, Page 14). After only living there a year, the Howards relocated to Erwin, North Carolina.<sup>4</sup> The Howards then sold the property to John and Rosabel Hutcheson, who moved to Wellesley from Ann Arbor, Michigan (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3029, Page 241). John Hutcheson was an actuary with the Boston pension consulting firm Warner-Watson Incorporated, and Rosabel Hutcheson attended Sweet Briar College and was a graduate of the Pratt Institute.<sup>5</sup>

The Hutchesons sold the property to Robert and Priscilla Spencer in 1958 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3673, Page 533). The Spencer family moved to Wellesley from Simsbury, Connecticut. Robert Spencer was the district manager of the Superior Electric Company, a Navy Veteran of World War II, and a graduate from the Bentley School in Boston and Grove City College in Pennsylvania.<sup>6</sup> Priscilla Spencer was an active conservationist in the Wellesley Hills Woman’s Club.<sup>7</sup> The property passed from Robert and Priscilla Spencer to their son, Stephen Spencer (Norfolk County Probate Court Docket 99P0468). Stephen Spencer transferred the property to Kimberley Spencer in 2018 while reserving a life estate interest in the premises (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 36262, Page 452). In December 2019 the property was acquired by 44 Sabrina Road, LLC (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 37455, Page 587).

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<sup>2</sup> Leo J. Madden, “BUILDING PERMITS,” *Wellesley Townsman*, June 6, 1946, page 13.

<sup>3</sup> “Newcomers to Wellesley,” *Wellesley Townsman*, February 2, 1947, page 17.

<sup>4</sup> “Neighborhood News,” *Wellesley Townsman*, October 25, 1951, page 15

<sup>5</sup> “Newcomers to Wellesley,” *Wellesley Townsman*, November 1, 1951, page 17.

<sup>6</sup> “Newcomers to Wellesley,” *Wellesley Townsman*, January 29, 1959, page 17.

<sup>7</sup> “Amos Mills D.A.R. To Hear Mrs. Spear,” *Wellesley Townsman*, October 3, 1968, page 12.

## **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. Following such a determination, the Applicant may request a reduction in the length of the delay period through the Waiver Process.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff is of the opinion that the subject building at 44 Sabrina 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.**