



STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2020-09 – 11 Wildon Road – Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 11 Wildon Road (Assessor's Parcel ID # 79-27)
Applicant: Thomas Sobell
Property Owner: Thomas Sobell, Trustee of Sobell Family Trust
Date: Report prepared 4/7/2020 for 4/15/2020 Historical Commission Meeting
Staff Contact: Dana Marks, Planner
Staff Recommendation: **Not Preferably Preserved**

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

On March 6, 2020, the Applicant submitted applications for Eligibility Notice and Preservation Determination indicating the intent to demolish a building located on the property and used as a dwelling. An Eligibility Notice was issued on March 9, 2020 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 April 15, 2020.

DESCRIPTION

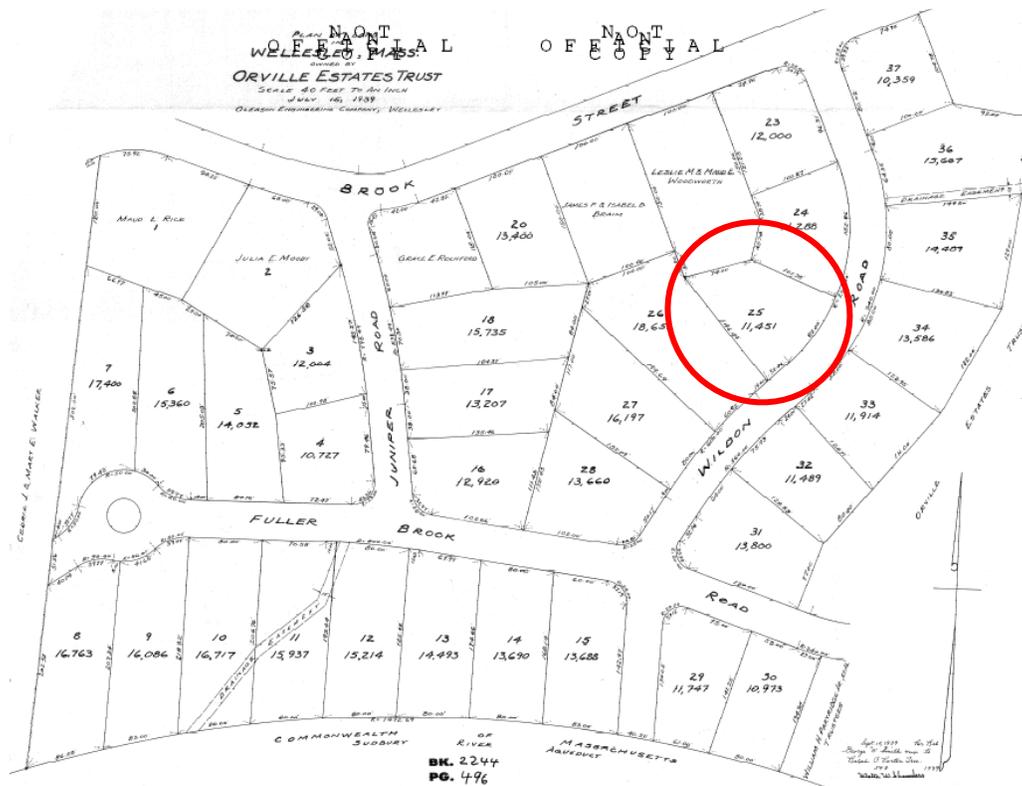
In consideration of the application for a full/complete demolition and in determining whether or not the dwelling should be deemed Preferably Preserved, it was determined that the original dwelling was constructed no earlier than November 29, 1945, when Building Permit 8650-1 was issued for a "dwelling and garage." This source proves that the dwelling at 11 Wildon Road is indeed Eligible and subject to a Preservation Determination pursuant to Article 46C of the Wellesley Town Bylaws.

Situated on an undersized (11,451 sq. ft.) lot within a SR20 district, the dwelling at 11 Wildon Road is a two-story Colonial Revival with a side-facing gambrel roof containing three separate dormers along the second story. It is clad in green shingle siding and has one-story wings on either side of the main structure. The right-side wing is a front-facing garage. A red central front door is flanked by a window on each side with black shutters. The three bays on the first floor are situated directly underneath each of the three second-story dormers.



Image via Assessor's Property Record Card

The dwelling was constructed in 1945 by builder Ralph Porter and the Orville Estates Trust. They acquired the property from the Partridge family, who owned a large estate around Fuller Brook in that area of Town. Known as Fuller Brook Farm, the Partridges had a duck farm as well as a sand and gravel company on the site.¹ After attaining a large portion of the Partridge family estate in 1939 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2248, page 360), Porter proceeded to create a subdivision, which can be seen on the plan below. 11 Wildon Road was built on Lot 25 in 1945 (Building Permit 8650-1). At the same time, Porter and the Orville Estates Trust were seeking building permits to construct homes on five other lots along Wildon Road.²



11 Wildon Road is situated on Lot 25, circled in red. (“Plan of Land in Wellesley, Mass. Owned by Orville Estates Trust,” dated July 1939, Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2244, Page 496)

After construction was complete, William and Helen Clough purchased 11 Wildon Road in 1946 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2634, Page 482). Mr. Clough was a journalist and free-lance writer for many years, and published a book of daily devotions entitled *Father, We Thank Thee*, in 1949.³ Their daughter Faith was a graduate of Dana Hall and Wellesley College.⁴

In 1958 the Cloughs sold the property at 11 Wildon Road to Newton and Agnes Wollter (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3634, Page 19). Later that year, the Wollters transferred the property to Henry and Gloria Sobell, who moved in with their son (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3689, Page 176). Mr. Sobell was an electrical and mechanical engineer, as well as

¹ “THE MAN ABOUT TOWN,” *Wellesley Townsman*, April 14, 1922, page 10; “SECOND NEW INDUSTRY TO BE INTRODUCED BY FULLWER BROOK FARM, INC.: William Partridge, Jr., Manager of Large Sand and Gravel Plant,” *Wellesley Townsman*, October 19, 1923, page 4.

² Leo J. Madden, “BUILDING PERMITS,” *Wellesley Townsman*, November 22, 1945, page 14.

³ Margaret S. Urann, “Local Family Edits Own Prayers In Book: ‘Father, We Thank Thee,’” *Wellesley Townsman*, April 21, 1949, page 16.

⁴ “Candidates For Degrees At Well. College,” *Wellesley Townsman*, May 26, 1955, page 3.

an Army veteran of World War II.⁵ The dwelling remains in the family today through the Sobell Family Trust, which formally gained the title to the property in 1994 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 10662, Page 467).

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 11 Wildon 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.

With respect to standard (i), the large estate belonging to the Partridge family that contained a duck farm and a sand and gravel company predated the development in which 11 Wildon Road is situated.

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.**

⁵ “Newcomers to Wellesley,” *Wellesley Townsman*, February 26, 1959, page 32.