



STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2020-17 – 93 Brook Street – Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 93 Brook Street (Assessor's Parcel ID # 89-38)
Applicant: Hui Peng
Property Owner: Hui Peng & Wen Yang
Date: Report prepared 7/9/2020 for 7/13/2020 Historical Commission Meeting
Staff Contact: Dana Marks, Planner
Staff Recommendation: **Not Preferably Preserved**

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

On June 14, 2020, 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 June 15, 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 July 13, 2020.

DESCRIPTION

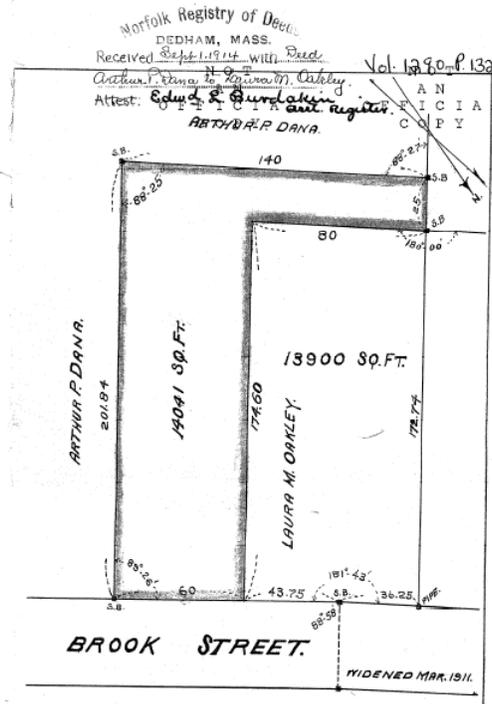
In consideration of the application for a full/complete demolition and in determining whether or not the dwelling should be deemed Preferably Preserved, it was determined that the original dwelling was constructed no earlier than August 23, 1913, when Building Permit No. 40 was granted for the construction of a "Summer Dwelling." This source proves that the dwelling at 93 Brook Street is indeed Eligible and subject to a Preservation Determination pursuant to Article 46C of the Wellesley Town Bylaws.

The house is built in a simple Colonial Revival style with a hipped roof over the original structure. The structure is situated far back towards the rear of a large lot, and is partially hidden from the public view due to trees and landscaping. A one-story addition was built in 1959 (Building Permit No. 13769), and a deck was added to the front of the house in 1978 (Building Permit No. 18524). Another addition and screened porch was added in 2004 under the previous owner (Building Permit No. 36255).



Image via Assessor's Property Record Card.

The land for 93 Brook Street was acquired in two transactions from Arthur P. Dana to Laura M. Oakley, and can be seen in the plan below. Throughout the 1900s and 1910s, Dana sold building lots throughout Wellesley, including along Brook Street, as evidenced by numerous ads placed in the *Wellesley Townsman*. He sold a 13,900 sq. ft. lot to Oakley in 1913 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 1246, Page 385), and an adjacent 14,041 sq. ft. lot in 1914 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 1290, Page 131). Both deeds outlined restrictions on what could and could not be built on the site, indicating that no building could be constructed within twenty-five feet of Brook Street and “There shall be no use nor occupation of said premises nor of any building at any time thereon which shall be injurious to a good residence neighborhood.”



Plan of Land of Arthur P. Dana, Wellesley Mass., July 30, 1914 (via Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Volume 1290, Page 132).

After constructing a “Summer Dwelling” (Building Permit No. 40), Oakley sold the property to Charles and Margaret Persons in 1920 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 1453, Page 257). At the time the *Wellesley Townsman* announced, “Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Persons of Columbus, Ohio, have bought ‘the Oakley’ on Brook Street.”¹ Margaret was a former Red Cross nurse during World War I.² Charles was a lecturer in Harvard University’s Department of Economics before being appointed “Expert of the Economics of Unemployment in the Federal Bureau of the Census” and relocating to Washington, DC in 1929.³ While residing in Washington, the Persons family still maintained ownership of 93 Brook Street until 1944 when it was sold to Robert and Irma Inez Thompson (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2492, Page 237).

In 1949 the Thompsons sold 93 Brook Street to Richard and Ruth McCue (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2836, Page 483). It was reported in the *Wellesley Townsman*: “Newcomers to Wellesley last month are Mr. and Mrs. Richard W. McCue, who moved to 93 Brook street from Boston. Mr. McCue, who is national school representative for News Week Magazine, served in the Navy four years during the war as storekeeper second class in the Pacific area.”⁴ Following Richard’s death in 1953, Ruth McCue sold the property to Charles and Jean Plough (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3227, Page 470).⁵ Charles was an engineer, a Navy veteran of World War II, and a graduate of Amherst College and the University of California. Jean was a graduate of Wellesley College in the Class of 1950.⁶

In 1958 the Ploughs sold the property to Henry and Joanne Slodden (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3659, Page 97). Henry was a graduate of Wesleyan University, a World War II veteran, and a salesman for a moving company. Joanne was a graduate of Dana Hall School and Connecticut College.⁷ She was also involved with the Newton-Wellesley Hospital, where she worked as a medical and surgical aide and later as a surgical technician.⁸ The current owners acquired the property from the Estate of Joanne Slodden in March (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 37676, Page 83) and are currently seeking a Preservation Determination.

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

¹ “ABOUT TOWN,” *Wellesley Townsman*, April 9, 1920, page 6.

² “Mrs. Charles Persons Died in Arlington, Va.” *Wellesley Townsman*, October 25, 1956, page 8.

³ “... ACCEPTS POSITION IN WASHINGTON,” *Wellesley Townsman*, November 11, 1929, page 3.

⁴ “Neighborhood News,” *Wellesley Townsman*, July 14, 1949, page 3.

⁵ “Richard W. McCue Passed Away Monday,” *Wellesley Townsman*, October 8, 1953, page 1.

⁶ “Newcomers to Wellesley,” *Wellesley Townsman*, January 21, 1954, page 16.

⁷ “Newcomers To Wellesley,” *Wellesley Townsman*, December 4, 1958, page 6.

⁸ “Hospital Honors Two Townspeople,” *Wellesley Townsman*, August 17, 1972, page 9.

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 93 Brook Street **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), while the property was once part of a large tract owned by Arthur P. Dana, he is not responsible for developing this property nor building the house at 93 Brook Street.

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.**