

STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2020-18 – 20 Wilson Street – Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 20 Wilson Street (Assessor's Parcel ID # 99-93)
Applicant: Edward & Kathleen Koval
Property Owner: Edward E. Koval Revocable Trust & Kathleen E. Koval Revocable Trust
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 17, 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 22, 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

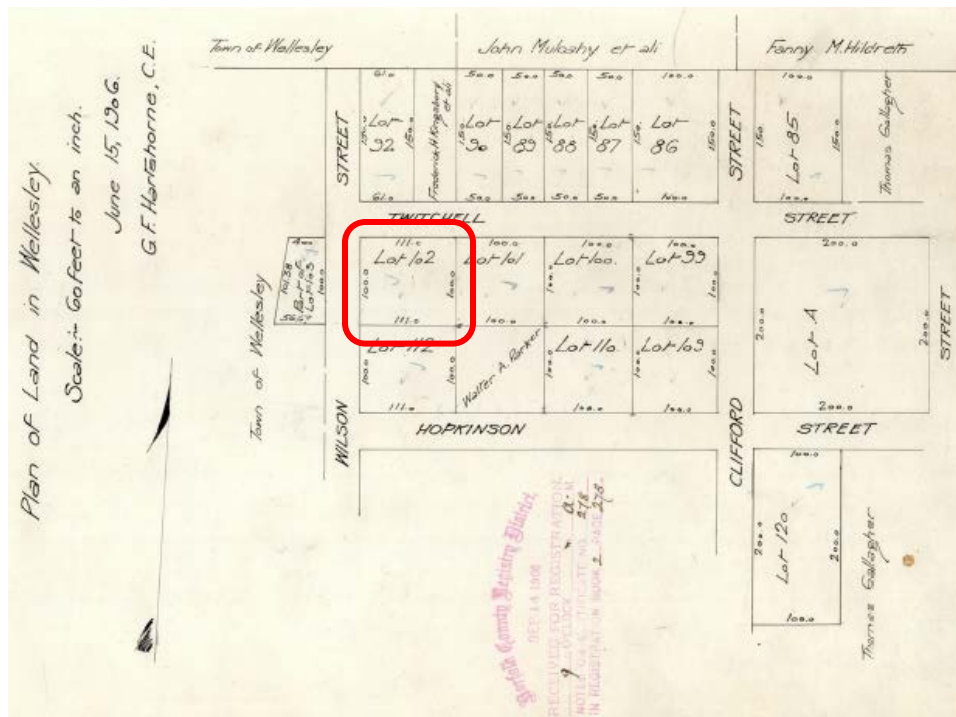
In consideration of the application for a full/complete demolition and in determining whether or not the dwelling should be deemed Preferably Preserved, it was determined that the original dwelling was constructed no earlier than November 2, 1939, when Building Permit No. 6951 was granted for the construction of a "Dwelling." This source proves that the dwelling at 20 Wilson Street is indeed Eligible and subject to a Preservation Determination pursuant to Article 46C of the Wellesley Town Bylaws.

Located at the southeast corner of Wilson and Twitchell Streets, 20 Wilson Street is a simple two-story Colonial Revival structure with a side gable roof. It has a central entry door facing Wilson Street and asymmetrical window placements. A small attached garage is situated to the left side of the main structure towards the rear. A one-story wing to the right was an existing porch that was enclosed in 1962 (Building Permit No. 14407). A rear addition was built in 1975 (Building Permit No. 17665), extending back towards its north property line.



Image via Assessor's Property Record Card.

The dwelling's original owner, Hamlet H. Collina, purchased a number of lots in the surrounding area from Grace K. Babson in 1934 (Norfolk County Land Court Document No. 53796). Under Collina's ownership, 20 Wilson Street was built on Lot 102 in 1939 (Building Permit No. 6951), which can be found on the plan below outlined in red.



20 Wilson Street is shown as Lot No. 102 (Plan No. 1487^A, dated June 1906, via Norfolk County Land Court).

A native of Italy, Collina became a United States citizen in 1929 and was a shoe repairman for a number of years, maintaining a shop in Wellesley Hills and along Central Street in Wellesley Square.¹ After his time in the shoe repairing business, Collina became a salesman and service

¹ "A NEW CITIZEN," *Wellesley Townsman*, October 11, 1929, page 4; "SHOE REPAIRING SHOP FOR WELLESLEY'S NEW SHOPPING DISTRICT," *Wellesley Townsman*, January 27, 1928, page 1.

representative for Electrolux Vacuum Cleaners and advertised regularly in the *Wellesley Townsman*.²

In 1946, Collina sold 20 Wilson Street to James and Mildred Dolan (Norfolk County Land Court Document No. 104182-1). Later that year the Dolans sold the property to Francis Richard and Lucille Obringer (Norfolk County Land Court, Certificate of Title No. 34152). F. Richard Obringer worked for the Liberty Mutual Insurance Company in Boston after graduating from the Pace Institute in 1939 and serving three years in the United States Navy.³

William and Audrey Josko acquired 20 Wilson Street in 1950 from the Obringers (Norfolk County Land Court, Certificate of Title No. 40497). William Josko was a faculty member at the Prince School of Retailing at Simmons College before working for Eastern Gas & Fuel Associates in Boston, then later with the James Flett Organization, Inc. in Chicago.⁴ Aside from retail and sales, William was the “originator” of the Santa Claus Training Institute of Boston, where he trained many individuals in the art of impersonating the jolly fellow.⁵ After relocating to Chicago, the Joskos sold 20 Wilson Street to Timothy and Eleanor Regan in 1952 (Norfolk County Land Court Document No. 149382-1).

In 1953 Horace and Elizabeth Poole purchased the property (Norfolk County Land Court, Certificate of Title No. 49101). Their arrival in Town was announced in the *Wellesley Townsman*: “Mr. and Mrs. Horace Poole moved to 20 Wilson street a month ago from Syracuse, N. Y. Mr. Poole is Sales Manager for the Boston Office of the Quaker Oats Co. Mr. and Mrs. Poole both attended the University of Massachusetts. They have two girls, Barbara, 15, and Nancy, 12.”⁶

The Pooles remained at 20 Wilson Street until they transferred the property to Harold and Virginia Fennessey in 1961 (Norfolk County Land Court, Certificate of Title No. 68322). Harold Fennessey was a project engineer for the Limbach Company in Boston.⁷ Mr. and Mrs. Fennessey transferred the property to a family trust in 1998, naming themselves as trustees (Norfolk County Land Court Document No. 797859). The property stayed within the family until 2019 when the current owners acquired 20 Wilson Street (Norfolk County Land Court Document No. 1425828-1). They are now seeing 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

² “Neighborhood News,” *Wellesley Townsman*, April 9, 1942, page 7.

³ “Neighborhood News,” *Wellesley Townsman*, November 10, 1949, page 8.

⁴ “Named Sales Manager Of James Flett Organization, Inc.” *Wellesley Townsman*, May 31, 1951, page 8.

⁵ Cynthia Burton, “Santa Claus Now making His Home In Wellesley,” *Wellesley Townsman*, December 21, 1950, page 1.

⁶ “Newcomers to Wellesley,” *Wellesley Townsman*, November 12, 1953, page 16.

⁷ *Wellesley Townsman*, August 6, 1964, page 15.

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 20 Wilson 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.

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.**