

STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2020-45 – 24 Priscilla Road – Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 24 Priscilla Road (Assessor's Parcel ID # 30-21)
Applicant: 187-189 Walnut Street LLC
Property Owner: 187-189 Walnut Street LLC
Date: Report prepared 11/5/2020 for 11/9/2020 Historical Commission Meeting
Staff Contact: Dana Marks, Planner
Staff Recommendation: **Not Preferably Preserved**

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

On October 8, 2020, the Applicant submitted applications for Eligibility Notice 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 October 9, 2020 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. The Applicant then submitted an application for Preservation Determination on October 20, 2020. The Historical Commission will hold a public hearing on the application for a Preservation Determination on November 9, 2020.

DESCRIPTION

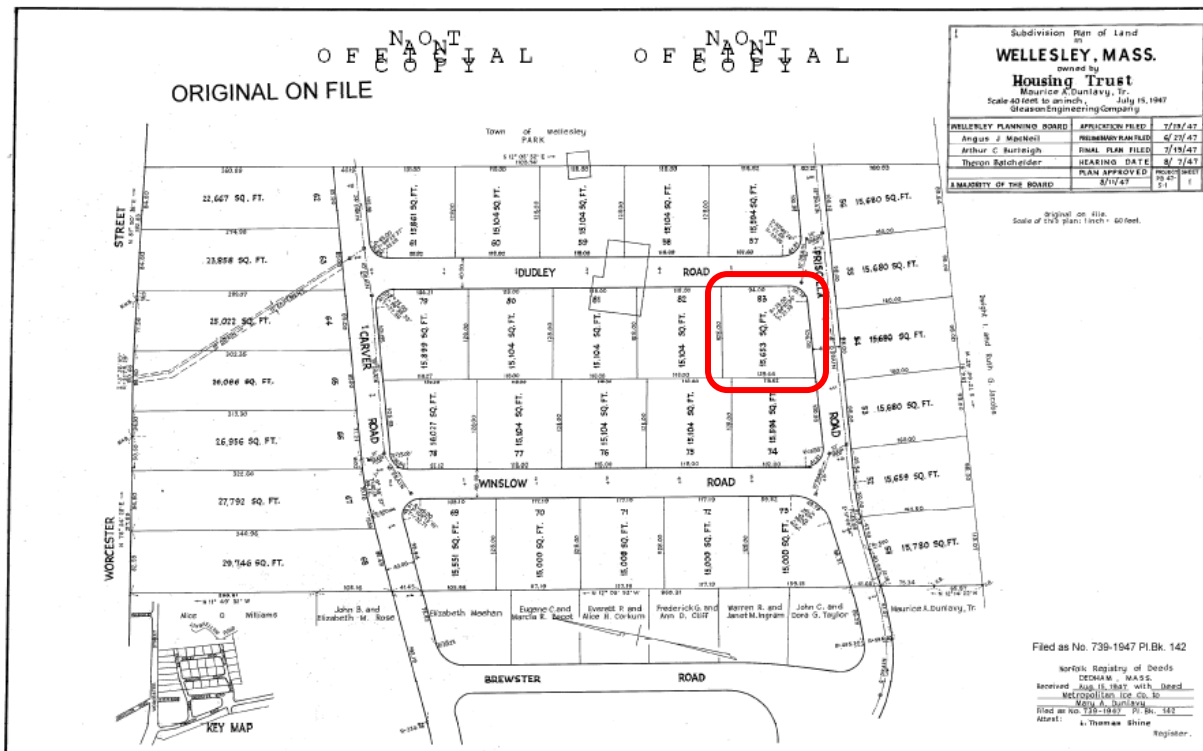
In consideration of the application for a full/complete demolition and in determining whether or not the dwelling should be deemed Preferably Preserved, it was determined that the original dwelling was built no earlier than September 1, 1949, when Building Permit No. 10103 was issued for the construction of a "Dwelling." Furthermore, the deed transferring the property from Maurice A. Dunlavy and Mary A. Dunlavy to Reynold Ronci and Helen Ronci, recorded on December 27, 1949, references "the land in said Wellesley will the buildings thereon." (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2881, Page 75). These sources prove that the dwelling at 24 Priscilla Road is indeed Eligible and subject to a Preservation Determination pursuant to Article 46C of the Wellesley Town Bylaws.

Located near Longfellow Pond within the Standish Estates Neighborhood, 24 Priscilla Road is a one-story Cape Cod style dwelling. With five bays along the front façade of the main structure, the entry door is in the center flanked by two windows on each side. It has a side gable roof on the main structure as well as the attached two-car garage to the right.



The shutters in the image are no longer present on the house today.
 Image via Assessor's Property Record Card.

The subdivision in which 24 Priscilla Road is situated can be traced back to 1947 when Mary A. Dunlavy acquired 16 lots on the plan depicted below from the Metropolitan Ice Company (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2700, Page 94). Mary Dunlavy was the wife of Maurice A. Dunlavy, Trustee of the Housing Trust, who was responsible for developing a larger portion of the Standish Estates Neighborhood throughout the 1940s. In September 1949, Building Permits No. 10103 and 10104 were granted to Dunlavy's Housing Trust to construct a "Dwelling" and "Garage" at 24 Priscilla Road on the lot outlined in red below. On December 27, 1949, Reynold and Helen Ronci acquired that lot "with the buildings thereon" and their deed to the property was recorded (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 2881, Page 75).



Plan No. 739 of 1947 via Norfolk County Registry of Deeds.

In 1954 the Roncis transferred the property to Arthur W. and Elsie K. Tilley from Boston (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3263, Page 393). Jane T. Bonin acquired the property in 1958 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 3647, Page 420). At that time, the house was described as “A Charming Custom-Built Cape Colonial.”¹

Lloyd B. and Ruth A. Henshaw acquired the property in 1970 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 4642, Page 362). The Hensaw’s arrival in Wellesley was reported in the *Wellesley Townsman*: “Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd B. Henshaw moved from Framingham to 24 Priscilla rd. on January 27... Mr. Henshaw, who previously lived in Wellesley, is the owner of the Sunshine Dairy here.”²

Richard W. and Elizabeth Stanton purchased the property in 1977 from the Henshaws (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 5327, Page 582). Paul R. Levesque purchased the property in 1980 (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 5717, Page 632). Four years later, is was purchased by Richard C. Schofield, Jr. (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 6398, Page 549). Schofield maintained ownership until September 2020 when the current owner purchased 24 Priscilla Road (Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 38364, Page 26). They are now 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 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 24 Priscilla 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

¹ *Wellesley Townsman*, August 14, 1958, page 13.

² “Newcomers to Wellesley,” *Wellesley Townsman*, March 19, 1970, page 27.

(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 Standish Road area where 24 Priscilla Road is located was recommended to become a Neighborhood Conservation District in 2015. No motion was offered to establish and designate the proposed District by Town Meeting, nor was 24 Priscilla Road included as part of the proposed District.³

With respect to standard (ii), 24 Priscilla Road is not a prominent or well-intact example of the Cape Cod style.

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.**

³ Study Report for A Proposed Standish Road Neighborhood Conservation District, August 2015; Town Clerk's Record Adjourned Session of 2015 Annual Town Meeting, April 8, 2015.