



## STAFF REPORT

### Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

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Application: DR-2023-03 – 38 Woodcliff Road – Preservation Determination  
Subject Property: 38 Woodcliff Road (Parcel ID #107-33)  
Applicant: BTE Development, LLC (Paul Bevilacqua, Manager)  
Property Owner: BTE Development, LLC (Paul Bevilacqua, Manager)  
Date: March 10, 2023  
Staff Contact: Eric Arbeene, Planning Director  
Staff Recommendation: **Preferably Preserved**

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#### APPLICATION OVERVIEW

On February 9, 2023, BTE Development, LLC (Paul Bevilacqua, Manager) submitted an Application for Eligibility Notice and Application for Preservation Determination indicating the intent to fully demolish a building located on the property at 38 Woodcliff Road and used as a dwelling. The application acknowledged the building to be an Eligible Building and requested a Preservation Determination from the Historical Commission. The Historical Commission will hold a public hearing on the application for a Preservation Determination on March 14, 2023.

#### DESCRIPTION

##### Construction and Architecture:

The building was built no earlier than April 21, 1934, when Building Permits No. 4571 and 4572 were granted for construction of a Dwelling and a Garage, respectively. Subsequent building permits were issued:

- Building Permit No. 7330 issued on August 20, 1940 to take the roof off the present ell and extend another story to make a sleeping porch.
- Building Permit No. 20695 issued on December 15, 1983 to renovate the kitchen and add a sunroom to the kitchen.
- Building Permit No. 21802 issued on November 25, 1985 to erect an 8'x8' tool house.
- Building Permit No. 26382 issued on July 28, 1992 to renovate the second floor bathroom.
- Building Permit No. 26964 issued on June 7, 1993 to extend the deck by 3 feet.
- Building Permit No. 28534 issued on June 28, 1995 for the replacement of the patio with a deck that will be connected with an existing deck.

Since the house was built before December 31, 1949, it is an Eligible Building under Article 46C.

The building is a two-story center entrance Colonial style home with a pitched gable roofline. It is largely in original condition with the exception of the addition of a sleeping porch and the sunroom to the kitchen, both of which cannot be viewed from Woodcliff Road.

The Building Permit states the homes was designed by famed architect Royal Barry Wills, one of the nation's most popular architects and champion of Cape Cod revival architecture. Wills designed a number throughout the neighborhood and New England, including nearby 4 Woodcliff Road, 12 Woodcliff Road and 30 Lowell Road.

Located in the Cliff Estates neighborhood, the home is surrounded by a number of number of comparably sized homes Colonial and Garrison style homes built between 1931 and 1940, including 35 Albion Road, 29 Woodcliff Road, 37 Woodcliff Road, 43 Woodcliff Road, 44 Woodcliff Road and 52 Woodcliff Road.

**Chain of Title:**

The property was created as Lot 24 on a Plan entitled "Subdivision of Cliff Estates No. 1 Wellesley Hills-Mass" owned and developed by Haynes and Hernandez, Inc., drawn by Everett M. Brooks Civil Engineer dated August 10, 1929, recorded with the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 1860, Page 332

On October 18, 1934 Frank Y. Clark sold the property to Clarence F. Melanson (Book 2048 Page 624)

On October 18, 1934, Clarence P. Melanson sold the property to Jess T. Melanson, Inc. (Book 2048 Page 625)

On November 1, 1935, Jess T, Melanson, Inc. sold the property to Eleanor L. Hackett (Book 2089 Page 611)

On November 30, 1949, Eleanor L. Hackett sold the property to Jean H. Makrauer (Book 2874 Page 389)

On March 25, 1965, Jean H. Makrauer sold the property to Lydia J. Schumacher and Evelyn L. Seeley (Book 4242 Page 284)

On July 12, 1965, Lydia J. Schumacher sold the property to Evelyn L. Seeley (Book 4274 Page 372)

On October 10, 1980, Evelyn L. Seeley sold the property to Diana Uehlein (Book 5792 Page 139)

On May 23, 1990, Diana Uehlein sold the property to Thomas H. Walsh, Jr. and Charlotte W. Walsh (Book 8645 Page 74)

On November 23, 2009, Thomas H. Walsh, Jr. and Charlotte W. Walsh sold the property to Charlotte W. Walsh, Trustee of the Charlotte W. Walsh Revocable Trust (Book 27246 Page 90)

On April 29, 2014, Charlotte W. Walsh, Trustee of the Charlotte W. Walsh Revocable Trust sold the property to Thomas H. Walsh, Jr. and Charlotte W. Walsh (Book 32221 Page 423)

On January 27, 2023, Thomas H. Walsh, Jr. and Charlotte W. Walsh sold the property to BTE Development, LLC (Book 41048 Page 157)

**Occupants:**

Staff did not discover that any of the owners of the home or their families were historic persons or associated with historical events. Some of the residents were involved in charitable and volunteer organizations such as Ms. Evelyn Seeley’s involvement with the Wellesley Hills Woman’s Club, Newcomers Club of Wellesley and Boston Christian Women’s Club and Ms. Diana Uehlein’s involvement with the Junior League of Boston.

**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;
- (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 38 Woodcliff Road 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** (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), Staff is not aware of any activities of the residents of the house that meet this criteria or standard.

With respect to standard (ii), the subject building is a Colonial designed by famed architect Royal Barry Wills and is located in the heart of the historic Cliff Estates.

With respect to standard (iii), the closest Local Historic District is the Tufts House Historic District at 38 Lowell Road, which is situated approximately 740 feet away from 38 Woodcliff Road.

*Therefore, based upon the above, **Staff is of the opinion that the demolition of the subject building would be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage of the Town and thus Staff recommends that the building should be deemed Preferably Preserved.***