



## Wellesley Historical Commission

Town Hall • 525 Washington Street • Wellesley, MA 02482-5992

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March 12, 2015

### BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

Ms. Barbara D. Searle, Chair  
Board of Selectmen  
525 Washington Street  
Wellesley, MA 02482

### RE: Historical assets in or near the “North 40”

Dear Ms. Searle and Members of the Board:

The Wellesley Historical Commission (WHC) sends its congratulations to the Board of Selectmen and all of the other officers, staff, and residents of the Town of Wellesley who participated in the Town’s successful acquisition of the tract of land known as the “North 40.”

Pursuant to its statutory charge to preserve and protect the historical assets of the Town, WHC has identified **two groups of notable structures** in or near the North 40 whose historic value WHC believes the Town should consider in long-term planning for the site. These include five privately-owned residences whose lots are located at the southeast corner of the North 40 and a segment of the Cochituate Aqueduct, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The first group of notable structures comprises five privately-owned residences that are all more than 100 years old, with one dating to 1755, three to the mid-nineteenth century, and one to 1912. Of particular interest are the following:

- 140 Weston Road (The William Deming House) was built in 1755 for Dr. William Deming, the first physician in West Needham (the future Town of Wellesley). Originally located at 496 Washington Street, the Deming House was moved in about 1870 to make room for the mansion of Elihu P. Marvin, which eventually was used as Post No. 72 of the American Legion.
- 112 Weston Road, conspicuously located at the intersection of Weston Road and Linden Street, is familiar to Wellesley residents as “the little yellow house.” Built in Natick in about 1855 and moved to this location in 1870 or 1871, the house was deeded to Walter Evans in 1870 by Henry F. Durant, the founder of Wellesley College. Evans, a native of Dublin, Ireland, had been a gardener on the estate of H.H. Hunnewell on Washington Street before joining the staff at the then-new Wellesley College, where he eventually became foreman of grounds.

The other three houses, located at 138, 144, and 148 Weston Road, are all handsome examples of early residential architecture and contribute to the historic character of this cluster of houses located near a nexus of ancient roads.

The second category of notable structures consists of a segment of the Cochituate Aqueduct (the Aqueduct). The Aqueduct is a major component of a designated historic zone, the Water Supply System of Metropolitan Boston Thematic Resource Area. This network of reservoirs, tunnels, bridges and other structures, constructed in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, extends across six municipalities and is listed in the NRHP. This listing recognizes the system's importance in the history of civil engineering and in the development of Boston and surrounding communities, including Wellesley.

The Town's present-day public use of aqueduct trails for passive and active recreation—and of the North 40 segment in particular, with its naturalistic setting—serves as a daily reminder of the vision and ingenuity of those who came before us.

Although we are unaware of any current plans that would have an adverse impact on these historic sites, we wish to bring their historic significance to the attention of the Town and to request that this significance be considered in any future deliberations on the use of the North 40 itself. WHC will of course be happy to supply further information or meet with any Town board or group that is considering this matter.

With best wishes,



Tad Heuer  
Chair, Wellesley Historical Commission

cc: North 40 Committee, Don McCauley, Chair  
Planning Board, Sara Preston, Chair  
Natural Resources Commission, Heidi Kost-Gross, Chair  
Design Review Board, Johnathan Law, Chair  
Permanent Building Committee, Matthew King, Chair  
Community Preservation Committee, Barbara McMahon, Chair  
Trails Committee, Miguel Lessing, Chair  
Hans Larsen, Executive Director of General Government Services  
Meghan Jop, Deputy Director of General Government Services  
Michael Zehner, Planning Director  
Brandon Schmitt, NRC Director