

Single Building Historic Districts



PUBLIC HEARING

FEBRUARY 24, 2014

Article 33



To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Map by establishing two (2) new Historic District Overlays to be located at 26 Elmwood Road to be know as the Sylvia Plath House Historic District and at 126 Woodlawn Avenue to be known as the Fiske House Historic District.

Chapter 40C



- Chapter 40C was established in 1960.
 - Permits towns to preserve one or more buildings by creating historic districts.
- Preservation is achieved by regulating exterior modifications visible from a public way through local bylaws.
- Historic Districts in the Commonwealth today:
 - 200 Single Building Historic Districts
 - 230 Multiple Building Historic Districts

Wellesley's Historic Districts



- Wellesley adopted Section XVID, *Historic Districts*, of the Zoning Bylaw in 1980.
- The Cottage Street Historic District was established in 1980 with 61 properties.
- Two single building historic districts were established in 2011:
 - Methodist Meeting House Historic District (377 Weston Road)
 - Tufts House Historic District (38 Lowell Road)

Wellesley's Historic District Bylaw



- The Cottage Street Historic District and the Single Building Historic Districts are administered by the Wellesley Historic District Commission (WHDC).
- New construction and alterations to existing buildings or structures require review by the WHDC.
 - Exemptions are identified in the bylaw such as choice of paint color and color or material of roof.
- Transferring ownership does not remove the historic district designation.

Existing Historic Districts



Preserving Historic Properties in Wellesley



- The 2007-2017 Comprehensive Plan recommended establishing a process to preserve individual properties.
 - In 2011, two individual properties were preserved as Single Building Historic Districts through the existing Historic District Zoning Bylaw.
- In late 2013, two property owners approached the Town to preserve their properties.
- Following the same process, the Study Committee is now recommending preservation of those two properties:
 - 26 Elmwood Road (Parcel ID 72-20)
 - 126 Woodlawn Avenue (Parcel ID 181-75)

Proposed Sylvia Plath House Historic District

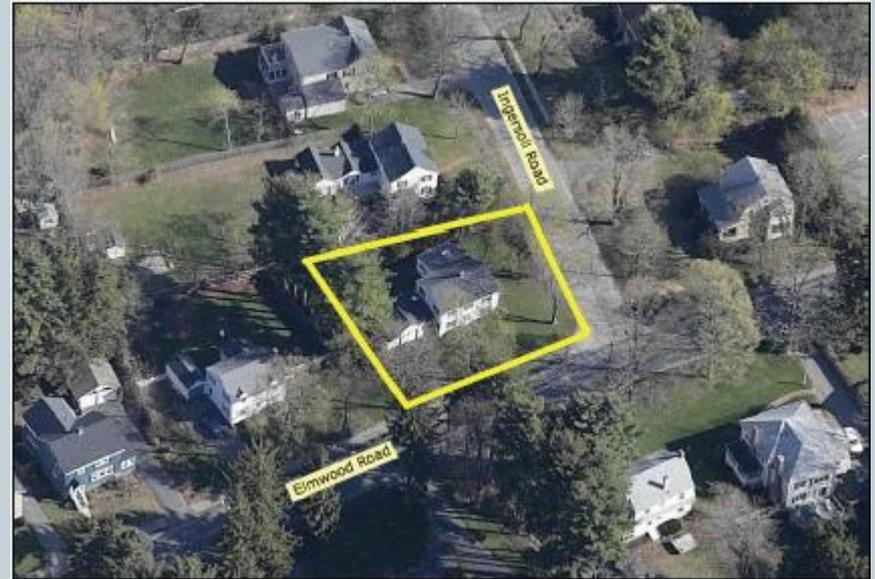
26 Elmwood Road



Sylvia Plath House



- Built in 1942 at 26 Elmwood Road
- Colonial Revival style
 - Popular house style built in Wellesley between the 1930s and 1950s
- Good example of the Fells development pattern
 - Smaller lots and smaller homes
- House is largely unchanged since construction



Sylvia Plath



1955



1957

Sylvia Plath



- The Sylvia Plath House is worthy of preservation due its internationally famous resident.
- Sylvia Plath lived in Wellesley between 1942 and 1955.
 - Attended Wellesley public schools.
 - Her experiences while living in Wellesley, including the home itself, figure prominently in her writing, especially *The Bell Jar*.
 - Her house in Wellesley, which has been little altered since she lived there, is an important piece of the puzzle to understanding a life tragically cut short at the age of 30.

Proposed Fiske House Historic District

126 Woodlawn Avenue



~1881



~1937



2013

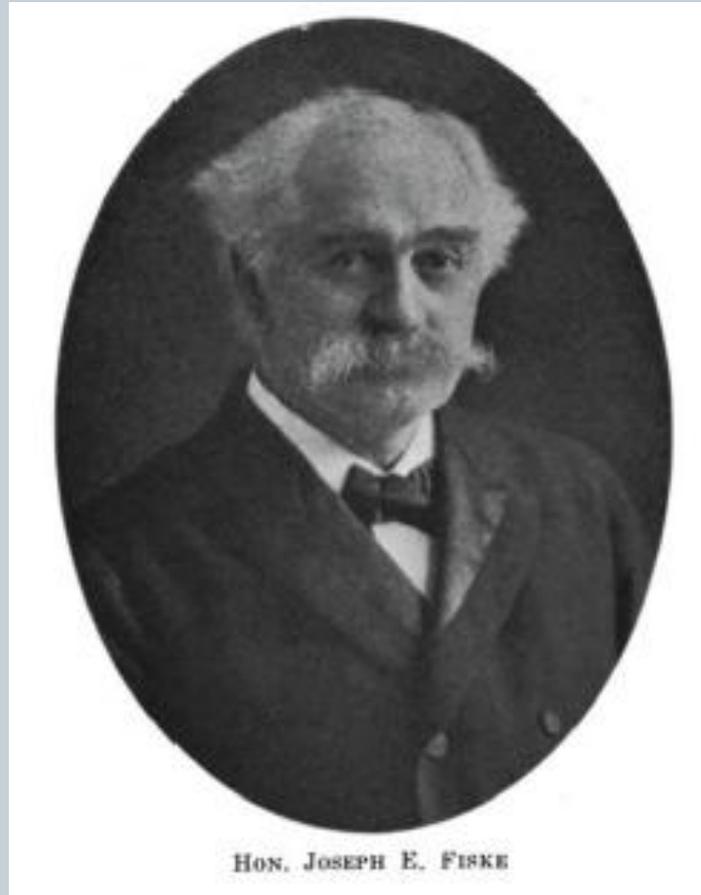
Fiske House



- Colonial Revival style home at 126 Woodlawn Avenue.
- Owned by Fiske family from at least 1824 through 1937.
- Structure underwent significant renovation in 1937.
 - Most notably, the structure was rotated 90 degrees to face east from its original south face.
- Only four families have owned the property.



Joseph Emery Fiske



Joseph Emery Fiske



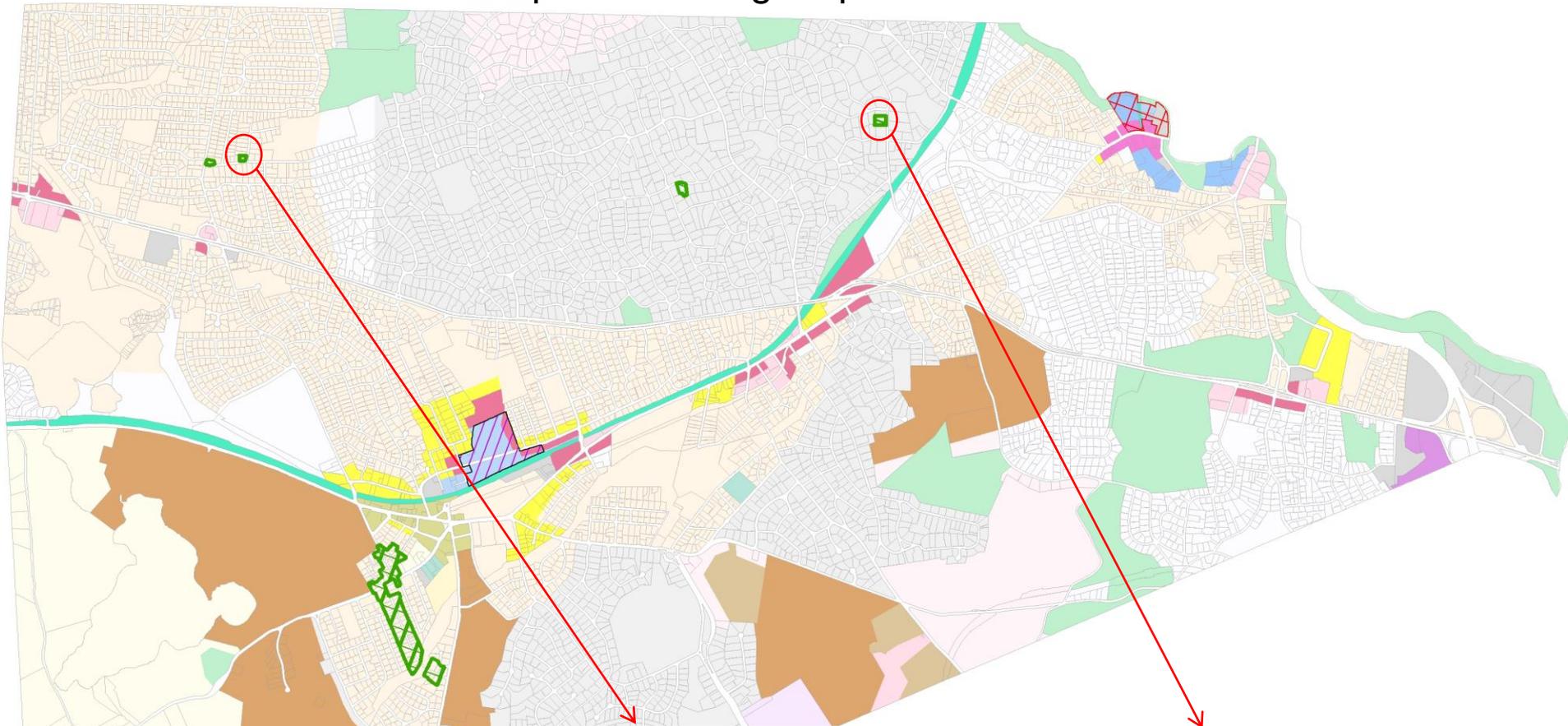
- The Fiske House is worthy of preservation as an early home in Wellesley and due to its resident's contributions to Wellesley.
- Lifelong residence of Joseph Emery Fiske (1839-1909)
 - Led the separation of Wellesley from Needham in 1881
 - Fiske School is named for him honoring his service to the first School Committee
 - Contributed to the development and character of Wellesley Farms

Preserving Wellesley's Past



- The Sylvia Plath House and the Fiske House offer a unique perspective on Wellesley's history and famous residents.
- The Study Committee recommends the establishment of two new Single Building Historic Districts by the 2014 Annual Town Meeting.
- If approved, the Single Building Historic Districts will be governed by Section XIV D of the Zoning Bylaw.
- If approved, the proposed zoning map amendment would apply the Historic District Overlay Zoning District.
 - Overlay zoning does not change the underlying zoning.

Proposed Zoning Map Amendment



Sylvia Plath House Historic District

Fiske House Historic District

