

TOWN OF WELLESLEY

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MASSACHUSETTS



888 Worcester Street, Suite 160  
Wellesley, MA 02482

## Historic Home Plaque Application

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

Houses must be at least 100 years old to be eligible for a Wellesley Historical Commission Historic Home Plaque. The plaques are decorative markers only and impose no restrictions on the property or homeowner. The below owner requests the manufacture of a plaque bearing the year of construction for the property listed above.

Wellesley Historical Commission Historic Home Plaques are **\$50.00**.

Owner's Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if other than above) \_\_\_\_\_

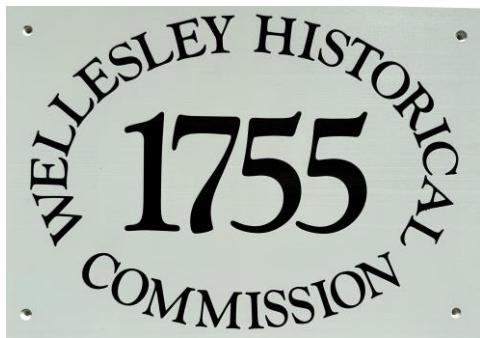
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$50 payable to Wellesley Historical Commission sent to:  
Wellesley Historical Commission  
888 Worcester Street, Suite 160  
Wellesley, MA 02482

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Plaque Example:



*Homeowners are responsible for plaque installation.  
The plaque should be installed and maintained in a location on the structure where it can be seen from a public way.*

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## **Plaque Program General Information**

One of the most important ways in which the Wellesley Historical Commission (WHC) promotes awareness of the Town's history is through its plaque program. The original WHC plaque program was conducted in conjunction with the National Bicentennial and Town Centennial celebrations in 1976 and 1981, respectively. At the time, plaques were placed on almost all of the houses and buildings in Wellesley that were constructed before the Town's incorporation in 1881. The Wellesley Historical Commission now permits the placement of plaques on all houses and buildings in Wellesley constructed 100 or more years ago. This cutoff date advances each year.

### **How the Year of Construction is Determined**

Once a plaque is requested, the WHC follows the below three-step process to determine the year of construction:

- i) Conduct a complete deed search on the property using the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds online database
- ii) Check the Annual Town Reports to find out when the house first appears in the assessment records
- iii) Consult other sources (Building Department permits, maps, reliable genealogies, Wellesley Townsman archives, etc.) as cross-references.

Determining the year of construction for any older house or building is not an exact science.

Building permits were not required in Wellesley until the early 1920s and some homes do not have building permits associated with their modern addresses. The Annual Town Reports can give us a probable date, but a complication of this method is that the assessment information is not based on a calendar year. Rather, it is as of May 1st (prior to and including 1910) and April 1st (after 1910). A house therefore could have been constructed in the summer or fall but would not appear in the Annual Town Reports until the following year. In the absence of additional information regarding the construction of the house, we adopt a conservative approach and use the latter year.

Please note that we interpret the year of construction as the year initial construction was completed. Subsequent modifications, though often of historical interest, are not indicated on the plaque.

The date determined by the WHC may be different from the so-called 'public record' date that appears within the Town Assessor's records as well as on real estate listing sheets. The public record dates are frequently estimates and are therefore often inconsistent with the historical record.

Please contact [historic@wellesleyma.gov](mailto:historic@wellesleyma.gov) if you have any additional information regarding the year of construction of your house or have any questions regarding the WHC plaque program.