Brookline Preservation Commission Demolition Application Report

Address: 89 Arlington Road

Petitioner: Joseph Cunningham

Building type: partial demolition (removal of roof) of house

National Register Listing (if applicable): n/a

Historical/Architectural Significance:

The house at 89 Arlington Road was designed and built in 1954 by Gaetano Megliola of Roslindale for owner Helen Silk, who lived at the time on nearby Rangeley Road. This one-story brick-veneer ranch with a cross-gable roof is set into the hill on the east side of the street, with a two-car garage under the projecting gable on the north end. Large steel picture and casement windows on the front facade have divided lights and appear to be original to the construction date of the house. The entryway is located in the corner between the two ells, with a cantilevered portico roof extending out from the roof slope of the side ell. A wide chimney anchors the south side of the house.

The Arlington-Beresford-Kensington neighborhood was one of the areas documented in the second part of the Community-wide 20th Century Building Survey in 2010.

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The Arlington Road-Beresford Road-Kensington Circle Area is a subdivision of 61 properties in a hilly area at the extreme southern boundary of Brookline, bordering Newton. The subdivision is bounded by the Lost Pond Sanctuary Conservation Area on the northwest, the transfer station facility off Transfer Station Drive on the northeast, and Sky Line Park and the Martha's Lane subdivision on the southeast. In the late 1940s, an unpaved path connected Arlington Road in this subdivision through the woods to the northernmost segment of the same road, which is in a separate subdivision off Heat Street to the north. The town's Transfer Station, 815 Newton Street, now occupies a site on the original wooded path of Arlington Road.

Architecturally, this area is typical of residential development in South Brookline in the range of styles present, and retains a high degree of integrity. Of the 61 houses in the subdivision, 36 date to the first phase of development, from 1935 through 1941. Most of these houses are located on Arlington Road and the ends of Kensington Circle. As a group, houses from this period are Colonial Revival or English Revival in style, two or 2½ stories, with gable or hip roofs, concrete foundations, and attached garages.

Different forms of ranches are present in the neighborhood, some built into the grade with garage bays under the house. The gabled, vinyl-sided ranch at 63 Kensington Circle (1953, Louis Wolk, archt.) has a four-bay façade with entry in the third bay and an attached garage. This ranch features a low roofline, windows placed close to the eaves, and a floor-to-ceiling multi-pane picture window in the living room. The front door, with its vertical panel of glass, appears to be original. At 124 Arlington Road (1957, J. Salsberg, archt.) is a hip-roofed brick ranch with a basement-level garage. The entry is recessed beneath an integral porch near the center of the façade and the windows contain sliding sash. A cross-gable Contemporary raised ranch at 20 Kensington Circle (1964, George Nelson, archt.) displays the character-defining entry positioned midway between the basement and upper floor, with an oversized transom above. Other features include the overhanging eaves with exposed purlins, vertical siding on the upper floor and brick veneer at the basement level, and sliding sash.

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abutting houses at 81 & 97 Arlington Rd

Other neighborhood houses built in the 1940s

44 Beresford Rd (1949); William Krokyn, archt.

124 Arlington Rd (1957);
J. Salsberg, archt

63 Kensington (1953);
Lois Walk, archt

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The house at 89 Arlington Road meets the following criteria for an initial determination of significance:

c. The building is associated with one or more significant historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the Town or Commonwealth; and

d. The building is historically or architecturally significant in terms of its period, style, method of construction, or its association with a significant architect or builder, either by itself or as part of a group of buildings.

The house retains its integrity in terms of its location setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. It forms part of the group of houses along Arlington Road and the surrounding streets built in post-war traditional, colonial revival, ranch and split-level styles.

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The houses on the easterrn, upslope side of Arlington Road tend to be one and one-and-1/2 story buildings set into the hill, while on the opposite side the majority are two stories tall.

The subdivision at Arlington Road, Beresford Road, and Kensington Circle is a good example of residential development in South Brookline from the 1930s through the early 1960s. The Planning Board approved the subdivision layout in 1928 but the start of construction was delayed until the mid-1930s. The original tract apparently encompassed not only the present streets, but also the Martha's Lane vicinity, a private way to the east that was developed in the 1950s. Capitol Realty Corporation, with offices at 120 Boylston Street, Boston, owned the tract in the late 1920s. Ownership transferred by 1931 to Frederick E. Ordway, who was associated with Highland Trust Company, based at Union Square in Somerville. In 1935, when construction began, the town valued building lots in this subdivision from $300 to $600.

36 and 86 Arlington Road (both 1936) Samuel Glaser, arch.