

Brookline Preservation Commission

Local Historic District Report

Local Historic District: Pill Hill

Applicant: Rob Sokoloff

Address: 239-241 Walnut Street



Statement of Significance: The original section of this house was built as a brick two-story dwelling with a five bay facade and gable roof perpendicular to the street. The main entrance has sidelights and a transom in the Greek Revival style. This is a traditional type of transitional Federal to Greek Revival style dwelling that was common throughout rural New England but is rare in Brookline. It was constructed by Henry Carr, a mason from Roxbury sometime between 1836 and 1844. Carr acquired a portion of this property on May 27, 1836, and enlarged it in 1843. Carr died in 1859, leaving the property to his heirs. By 1874 the owner was Waldstein R. Chester, who was a Boston lumber dealer and evidently made several additions to the house. The construction history of the wood sections of the house is complex and has not been completely documented. The following information is known: According to the Brookline Chronicle on September 9, 1876, Chester was making “repairs” to the house. This probably included wood extensions on the west and north sides that are not indicated on the 1874 atlas but do show on the 1884 atlas. In 1895 Chester hired an architect to design a two-story wood addition, 35x55, on the rear that either replaced or absorbed the earlier addition. A second major change occurred in 1933 when W.R. Chester’s son, Harry, replaced a conservatory on the west wing with a large sunporch. It is likely that many of the windows were changed at this time, as well as other alterations such as the addition of a portico over the main entrance.

Number 241 was formerly the garage for 239 Walnut Street. The brick structure was built as a garage for W. R. Chester on the site of a carriage barn. It was designed and built by B.W. Neal, a prominent local builder who lived on Boylston Street not far from this property. The building is unusual as a substantial two story brick garage constructed in the tradition of large two story carriage barn. It’s pre-1910 construction date makes it one of the first generation of automobile garages in Brookline.

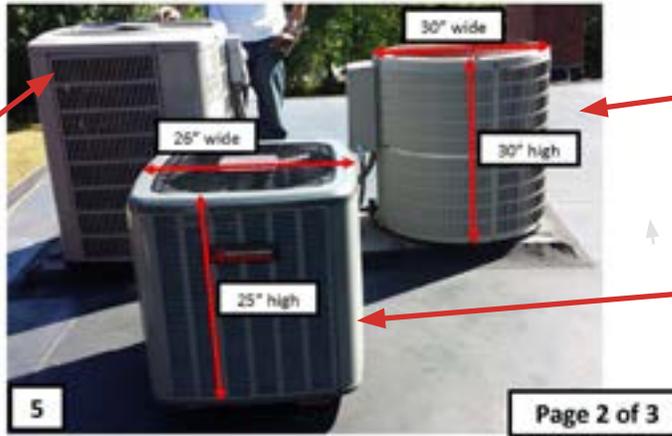
Proposed Alterations: Application for a Retroactive Certificate of Appropriateness to replace round rooftop compressor with a new one of smaller dimensions.

Applicable Guidelines: “Rooftop HVAC and other mechanicals, including soundproofing elements, should be placed out of view.”

Preliminary Findings: This matter came before the Commission in October visited the property and reviewed the site and the plans . The two earlier units were placed on the roof before the guidelines were in place.

The charge was to have the staff look into the matter. The staff went on site and reviewed the conditions. The new unit will be moved to the older unit; it is smaller and less visible. The other existing unit, when it goes, will be replaced by a smaller unit and moved behind the other unit to minimize visibility from Walnut Street. The electrical and mechanicals are so old and fragile, that to move them at this time would harm the unit. The applicant will then replace it and move the new replacement unit further back to minimize the visibility.

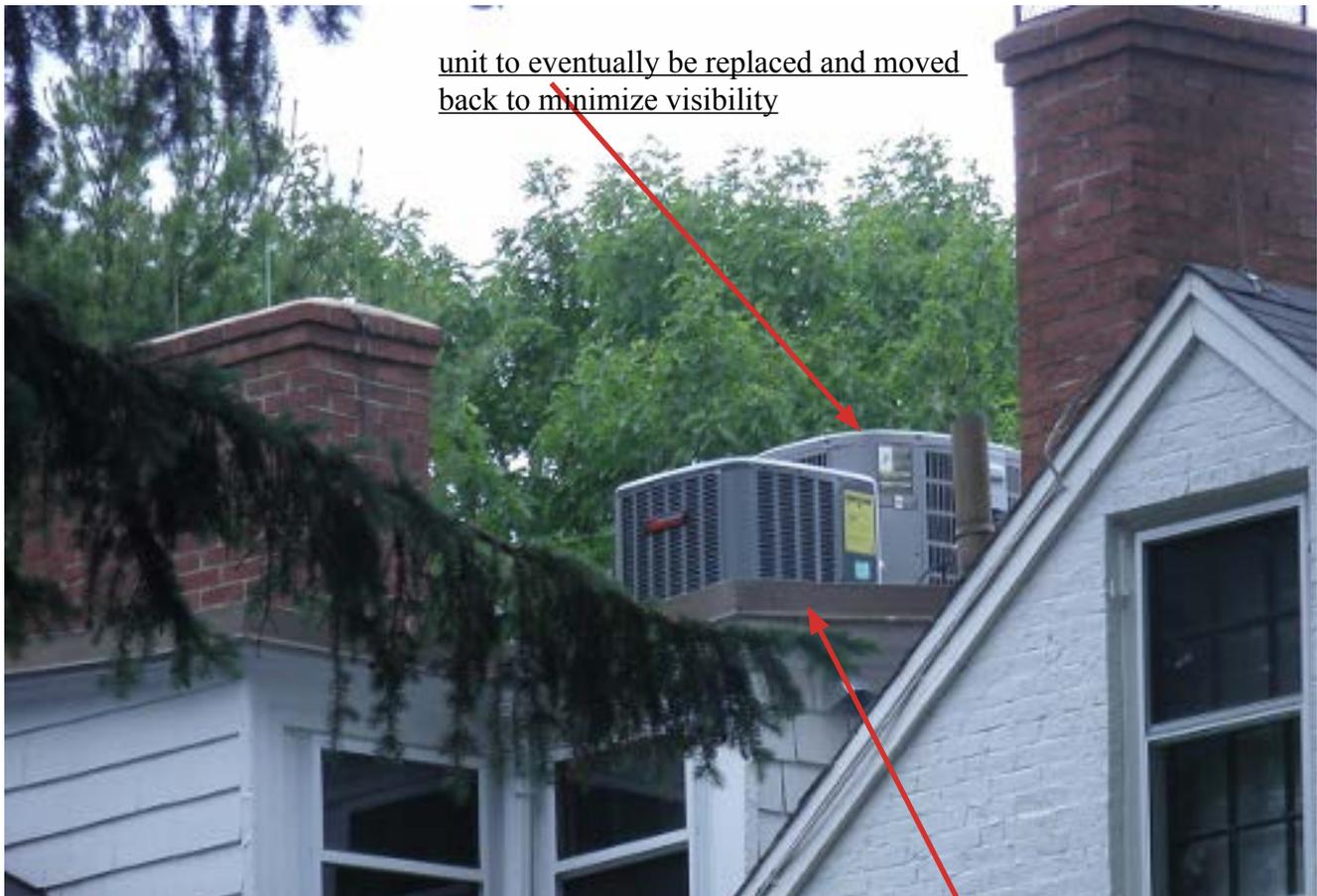




unit that will be replaced and moved to a less visible location when broken

to be removed and replaced with new unit, smaller & lower.

new unit to be moved to round unit space



unit to eventually be replaced and moved back to minimize visibility

unit to moved behind chimney