



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

GEORGE J. PROAKIS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTY
STAFF REPORT

Site: 11 Thorpe Street

Case: HPC.ALT 2023.41

Applicant: Griffin Dunn

Owner: Same as Applicant

Legal Ad: *The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter an LHD property by installing tracking lines for a ductless AC system.*

HPC Meeting Date: August 01, 2023



The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with a professional assessment of alteration proposals made for Local Historic District (LHD) properties. These assessments are based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, and the associated Design Guidelines. A Staff Report is not a determination/decision and does not represent findings. A staff report does not constitute authorization in any form.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Subject Property: The locus is the c.1830 Federal/Greek Revival style residence known as the Ira Hill House. This property is located within in the Prospect Hill neighborhood. A full description of the property is provided in the attached Form B survey held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).

Proposal: The following scope is under the purview of the HPC.

- Installation of two tracking lines on the left elevation of the structure to service a condenser system in the rear.

II. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

The HPC must make findings based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, and associated Design Guidelines. The portions of the regulations that are applicable to the proposed alterations are discussed below.

A. Exterior Walls & B. Roofs

The most relevant portion of the Design Guidelines is as follows:

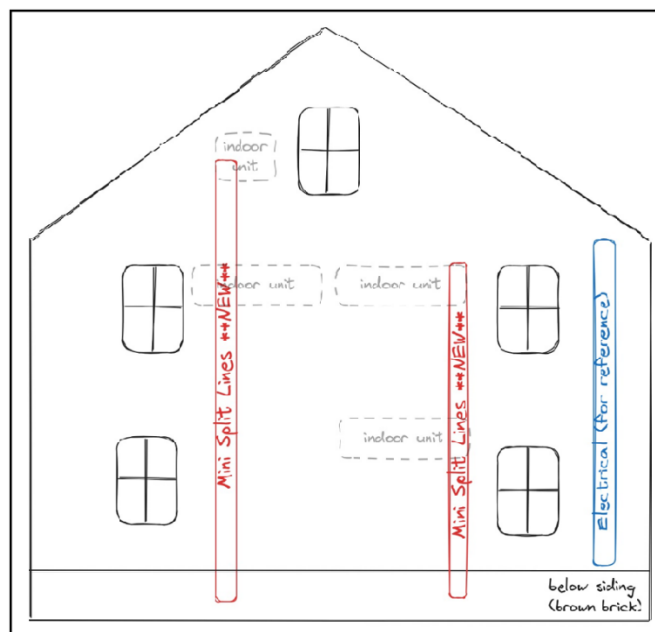
Utility equipment, such as television antennae, air conditioners, solar collectors and other mechanical units should be restricted to the rear of the property or on portions of the roof that are not visible from a public way. If no other placement is possible, air conditioning and other cooling units on street facades should be of the slim-line type or set flush with the surface of the building and painted the same color as the window trim.

Due to the proposed elements being visible from the right of way, the HPC has purview over these features and the materials used.

Applicant Proposal: The Applicant proposes to install two tracking lines on the left elevation. The tracking lines will be secured by casings screwed onto the facade. The lines and screws are to be painted to match the elevation.



Above: Tracking lines



Above: Image showing exact location of proposed tracking line location

These tracking lines will connect a condenser unit placed on the rear of the property and the indoor units both of which are not visible from a right-of-way.



Above: Proposed location of condenser

Preservation Planning Assessment:

The proposed tracking lines will be visible from a public way. Pursuant to the Design Guidelines

“Utility equipment, such as ... air conditioners ...and other mechanical units should be restricted to the rear of the property or on portions of the roof that are visible from a public way. If no other placement is possible, air conditioning and other cooling units on street facades should be of the slim-line type or set flush with the surface of the building and painted the same color as the window trim.”

The Applicant has placed the condenser in the rear of the property not visible from the right of way which is within keeping of the Design Guidelines. However, the tracking lines will be visible. The Design Guidelines state if such items are not possible to place in the rear, to have them flush to the building and paint them to match the building. While the tracking lines are not flush with the building, they will create minimal impact on the structure and shall be painted to match the building.

III. FINDINGS & VOTE

When bringing the matter to a vote the HPC must state their findings and reasons on why they take their position.

(Continued on next page)

IV. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Preservation Planning recommends the following conditions be attached to any Certificate of Appropriateness that the HPC might grant for this project:

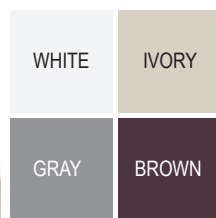
1. The Applicant/Owner shall file the Certificate with the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) by uploading it to the CitizenServe permitting portal with their application for zoning compliance/building permit.
2. This Certificate is valid for one year. If work has not commenced within one year of the HPC's date of determination, this Certificate shall expire, and the Applicant shall re-apply for re-issuance of this Certificate. Provided that no changes have been made to the proposal, this shall be a Staff-level re-issuance of the Certificate.
3. Any changes to this proposal made prior to the commencement of work or in-the-field changes shall be submitted to Preservation Planning for their review to determine if the changes come under the purview of the HPC. Failure to seek approval for changes may delay final sign-offs/Cos.
4. Tracking line shall be wrapped to match the portion of the building against which it rests.
5. The Applicant shall contact Preservation Planning at historic@somervillema.gov a minimum of 15 business days prior to final ISD walk-through so that Preservation Planning or their designee can confirm if the project was completed according to HPC approvals.

FORTRESS®

Model LDK 12' Lineset Wall Duct Kit

Complete kit! Includes 12' of duct and essential fittings.

Everything to hide and protect the lineset for a typical A/C installation in one box. Two sizes - 3 1/2 & 4 1/2. Four colors - White, Ivory, Gray and Brown.



NEW COLORS



LDK Kit includes:

- (3) LD - 4' Duct lengths
- (2) LJ - Couplers
- (1) LW - Wall Inlet
- (1) LEN - End Fitting
- (1) LK - 90° Flat Ell

Ordering Information:

- 84005** (LDK92W) - White kit 3 1/2
- 84105** (LDK122W) - White kit 4 1/2
- 84025** (LDK92I) - Ivory kit 3 1/2
- 84125** (LDK122I) - Ivory kit 4 1/2
- 84045** (LDK92G) - Gray kit 3 1/2
- 84145** (LDK122G) - Gray kit 4 1/2
- 84065** (LDK92B) - Brown kit 3 1/2
- 84165** (LDK122B) - Brown kit 4 1/2



Jun 13, 2023

We would like to install a Mitsubishi ductless AC system to provide air-conditioning to the second and third floors at 11 Thorpe St. Our selected HVAC contractor, SumZero, proposes to install one condenser (MXZ-SM36NAMHZ) to drive 4 wall mounted indoor units. This system will support air conditioning to the living room and each bedroom of the house (a total of 4 rooms).

The condenser will be placed on a stand under a staircase in the rear of the house (Photo 2), so that it will not be visible from the front or rear of the property. The unit's dimensions are: 41-13/32" x H: 52-11/16" x D: 13".

2 slim lines will run directly down the side (Photo 1) of the house under a paintable covering, similar to the electrical tube. The lines will run directly into the basement and then resurfaced under the staircase to connect to the condenser. The system will be wired to the current electrical panel.

We did not consider a ducted system as it would require significant renovations in the house that could damage the original beaming or floors.

Please see the attached images for details on the condenser and its placement.

HVAC Proposal for 11 Thorpe St
Griffin Dunn and Victoria Kayola

Jun 13, 2023



MXZ-SM36NAMHZ - Mitsubishi H2i® Hyper-Heating 36,000 BTU 4-Zone Heat Pump Unit

Noise Level Cooling: 49 dB(A)

Noise Level Heating: 53 dB(A)

Size W: 41-13/32" x H: 52-11/16" x D: 13"

Weight: 278 lbs

HVAC Proposal for 11 Thorpe St
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Jun 13, 2023



Image 1 -2 lines will run straight down the house, similar to the electrical tube and will be painted the same color as the house. Lines will run straight into the basement, painted brown, to reconnect with the condenser under the staircase.



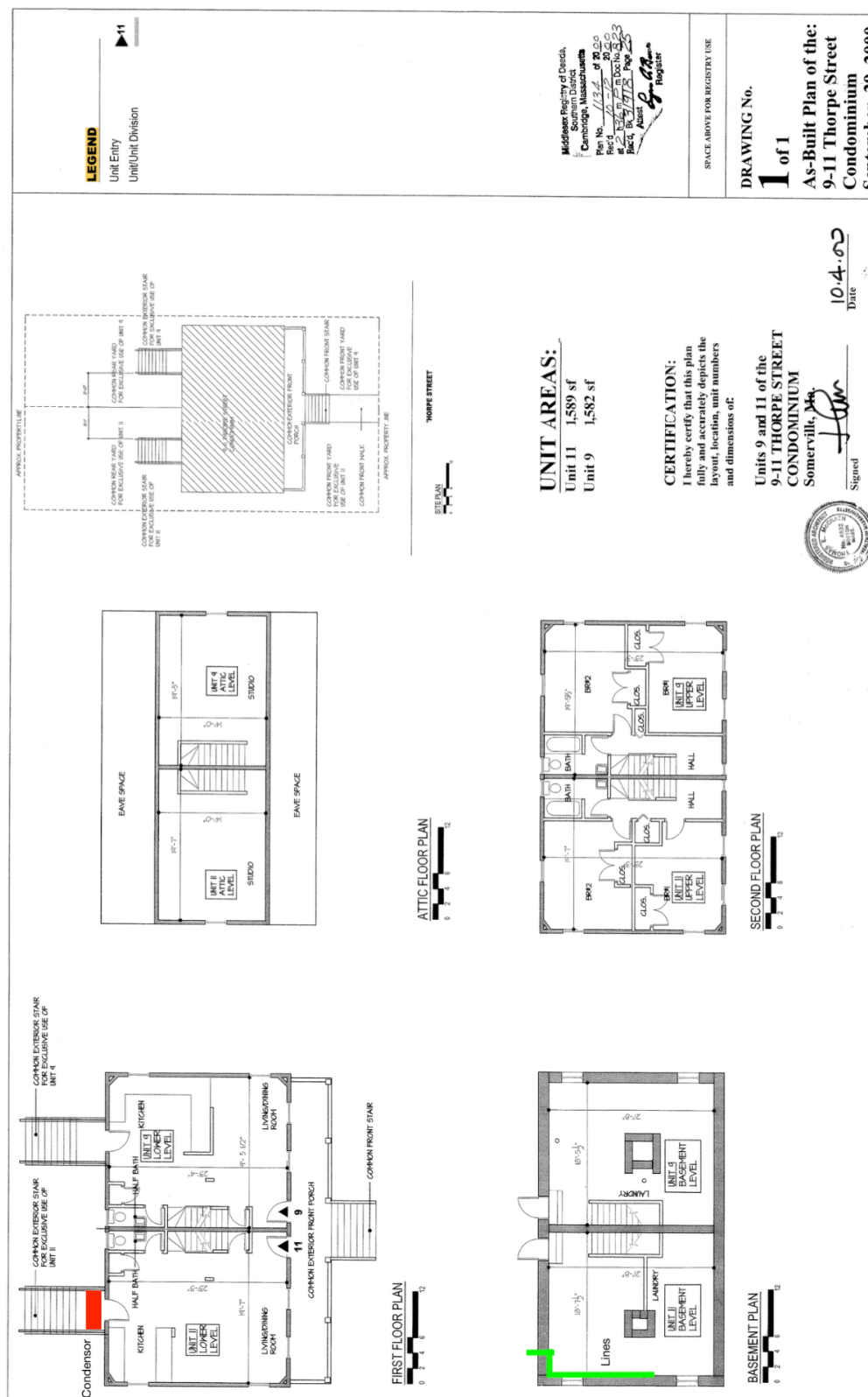
Image 2 - The condenser will be stored under the staircase, so that it is not visible.

Jun 13, 2023



Image 3 - Side of the house where the lines would be run up, only the edge of the lines would be visible from the street.

HVAC Proposal for 11 Thorpe St
Griffin Dunn and Victoria Kayola
Jun 13, 2023















Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.276
Historic Name:	
Common Name:	Hill, Ira House
Address:	11 Thorpe St
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	Prospect Hill;
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	C 1830
Architectural Style(s):	No style;
Use(s):	Multiple Family Dwelling House;
Significance:	Architecture;
Area(s):	SMV.C, SMV.BA
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (10/31/1989);
Building Materials:	Roof: Asphalt Shingle; Wall: Asphalt Shingle; Wood;
Demolished	No



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

The MACRIS database and scanned files are highly dynamic; new information is added daily and both database records and related scanned files may be updated as new information is incorporated into MHC files. Users should note that there may be a considerable lag time between the receipt of new or updated records by MHC and the appearance of related information in MACRIS. Users should also note that not all source materials for the MACRIS database are made available as scanned images. Users may consult the records, files and maps available in MHC's public research area at its offices at the State Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, open M-F, 9-5.

Users of this digital material acknowledge that they have read and understood the MACRIS Information and Disclaimer (<http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm>)

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

LHD-1031/89(10)
A. PROSPECT
USGS BOSTON
SECT B

AREA

FORM NO.

Prospect
Hill

276



own SOMERVILLE

Address 11 Thorpe Street

Historic Name Ira Hill (1870s)

Use: Present residential

Original residential

DESCRIPTION

Date ca. 1830

Source visual

Style Federal/Greek Revival

Architect

Exterior Wall Fabric asphalt shingles

Outbuildings

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition fair

Moved Date

Acreage 3600 sq. ft.

Setting West side of Thorpe, a small

cul de sac street near Walnut and

Medford Streets. Other modest

residential dwellings on street

Recorded by Carole Zellie - 1980
Gretchen Schuler - 1988

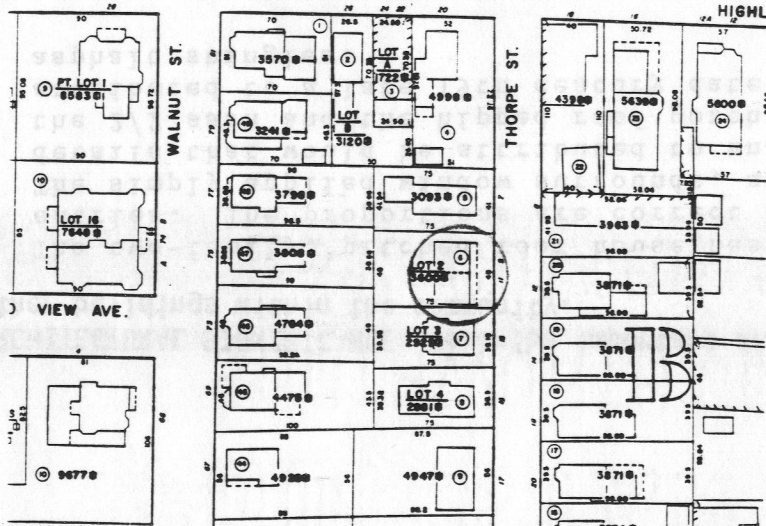
Organization April, 1988

Date

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north



HIGHLAND AVENUE



UTM REFERENCE

USGS QUADRANGLE

SCALE

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE** Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

The two-family, pitched roof house has a five-bay facade with central entries. The proportions are correct for an early 19th century building. The simply applied window surrounds, and the minimal roof overhang are details that would be attributed to an early structure. Details such as the 2/2 sash and the hipped roof porch with simple balustrade would be attributed to a late 19th century date. The building is now covered with asphalt shingles.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

Prospect Hill, one of the most prosperous residential neighborhoods, evolved throughout the late 19th century. Prior to that it was an agricultural community of farms. Large tracts of land were purchased by real estate investors and well-to-do merchants in the mid 1800s. Several subdivision plans were done for parts of Prospect Hill. Ira Hill, who lived at #91 Boston Street, was a principal in most. In the 1870s Ira Hill and Jerome Thorpe owned most of the land between Highland Avenue and Boston Street and Walnut and Thorpe Streets. Ira Thorpe was a large land owner of the 1850s and 1860s at the time of Robert Aldersey Vinal and Edwin Munroe, both of whom were grain dealers in Boston. It was after Ira Thorpe's family that Thorpe Place (later known as Street) was named when the street was laid out in the 1860s.

Ira Hill owned this property in the 1870s. There are undated newspaper articles at the Somerville Historical Society that relate Hill moving a building used for grain storage on Prospect Hill to Thorpe Place. Thus there is the possibility that this house was fashioned from a grain storage building. In any case it is an update of a moved building.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1874 ("Ira Hill"), 1884 ("B. Bodge"), 1895 ("Catherine Keyes").
2. City Directories, 1870s-1890s
3. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County: Book , Page ; Book , Page .