

May 18th, 2020

Dear Members of the Brookline Preservation Commission,

Existing condition:

A triple decker condo at 166 Walnut St. (Pill Hill Historic District) dating to 1900 drained by 6" x 4" (width x depth) fir gutters with a traditional Boston type profile (Figure 8 & Figure 9). The date of previous gutter installation is unknown. Various repairs of sections of gutter have been made over the years (see example Figure 10). In several locations the beds of the gutters have been patched and lined with an assortment of materials: mastic, aluminum flashing and other unidentified substances (see Figure 10). Rot and leaks are observed in several locations. Suspected rot in the fascia due to gutter overflow. There are three roofs with gutters: the main roof at a height of +/- 36 ft from ground level, a front porch at a height of +/- 14 ft from ground level roof and a back deck roof at +/- 33 ft from ground level (not visible from Walnut St).

Proposed alteration:

Replacement of the fir gutters and fascia board with fiberglass gutters matching the outside dimensions and profile of the existing fir gutters (Fibergutter FG90 see Figure 21) and attached to new composite fascia board. The gutters and fascia will be painted to match existing trim. The gutters will be drained by existing (painted aluminum) downspouts. Please refer to attached quote and Fibergutter specification document.

Rationale:

We are proud of our historic building and invested in the preservation of the character of our neighborhood. Although the material we propose was not in use in 1900 we have selected a product indigenous to New England developed specifically to retain original roof line of a building like ours while offering the durability and improved drainage of modern gutters. Fibergutter has been used with success on many historic buildings throughout Massachusetts (See Figure 12 to Figure 18). The joints in fiberglass gutters are mitered in the same manner as with wooden gutters rather than capped as with aluminum gutters (see Figure 19 vs. Figure 20) requiring that carpenters have the same skills they would need to install wood gutters. We believe that the new gutters will be indistinguishable from the old gutters from the street especially given the heights of the roofs. Up-close they are almost identical.

Material is often fundamental to the historic nature of a building and our choice to request this change has not been made lightly. Given their function, rot and leaks are almost inevitable with wooden gutters. We therefore believe that the use of this new material inscribes itself in the in the stated purpose of the historic districts by-law "to promote the ... cultural, physical, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the historical assets of Brookline" by:

- preserving and protecting our home in the most fundamental of ways by providing better drainage capacity, lower maintenance and impeding unsightly rot in a particularly rot prone area.

- supporting the cultural and economic welfare of the state by using products of local craftsmen trained in the culturally significant tradition of boat building as they innovate.
- promoting the sustainability of our building by choosing not to use a scarce and endangered environmental resource (fir now typically sourced from Western rainforests).

Sincerely,

Trustees of 166 Walnut St. Condo Association



Figure 1 : 166 Walnut St. Overall View