

Brookline Preservation Commission

Demolition Application Report

Address: 59-61 Mason Terrace

Petitioner: RLAW P.C.

Building Type: House and Garage (Full)

National Register Listing (if Applicable): N/A



Historical/Architectural Significance:

59-61 Mason Terrace is located in the area of Corey Hill, which has continually been prized for its spectacular views of Boston, as well as its reputation in the 19th century as a “healthier place to live” for its mild temperatures and an “abundance of good spring water”. Until the second half of the 18th century, Corey Hill predominately consisted of open pastures, wooden groves, and working farms. Cartographic evidence suggests that Mason Terrace showed increased signs of development in 1874 with the addition of large estates and smaller farms. Leon Rubenstein et al. acquired the land in approximately 1919 and subsequently divided it into smaller, buildable lots. The area is dominated by single and multi-family dwellings, composed of 20th century building types including neo-rational stucco, Dutch Colonial Revival, and 20th century interpretations of American Colonial Revival and English Tudor Revival styles.

The dwelling and garage at 59-61 Mason Terrace were designed in 1922 by prominent Brookline architect Harry M. Ramsay and built by local developer William Greenwood. Ramsay and Greenwood had a great working relationship, and collaborated on a variety of projects in Brookline. Harry M. Ramsay (1885-1962) designed more than 75 houses in Brookline along with other projects in Boston, Newton, Watertown, and Wellesley. He was born in Canada and was naturalized in 1939. Several of his houses were highlighted in national publications, including American Magazine, Iron Age, and Building and Home. Most of Ramsay’s work before World War II was traditional: American Colonial, Tudor Revival and Cape style homes. After the war, his work also included custom-designed ranch and split-level style houses. Ramsay used a design similar to the one in 59-61 Mason Terrace for Brington Road, Griggs Road, and Stedman Street.

59-61 Mason Terrace is a two-story, craftsman style building with an irregular plan. The dwelling, which sits on a concrete slab foundation, is constructed of wood and is clad in stucco. The shallow hipped roof is clad in asphalt and contains one central dormer window. The front (north) elevation is characterized by three bays, which consist of 2 pairs of 6/6 double hung windows flanking a central entry. A central, one-story portico is distinguished by its shallow roof

enclosed by a wooden railing. Although the railing system has been altered, 64 Brington Street in Brookline, also designed by Ramsay, is an excellent example of what the railing would have originally looked like. A brick, full height eaves through chimney and portico, which appear to be original to the dwelling as shown in Bromley maps from 1927, protrude from the east façade, and are character defining features of this structure.

A one-story brick and wooden garage set on a concrete slab sits at the southeast corner of the lot. Research indicates this structure was constructed at the same time as the aforementioned dwelling in 1922. This garage consists of two bays, and features a stepped parapet roof, which became popularized ca. 1915 due to the design feature's ability to enhance the design for little additional cost.

The existing structures still retain their original footprint and overall massing. While no building permits exist aside from the original, it appears that the original windows have been replaced.

The house and garage retain integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, and association.

The house and garage at 59-61 Mason Terrace meet the following criteria for an initial determination of significance:

- c. The buildings are 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 buildings are historically or architecturally significant in terms of its period, style, method of construction, or their association with a significant architect or builder, either by themselves or as part of a group of buildings.



Aerial view of 59-61 Mason Terrace, looking south.



Aerial view of 59-61 Mason Terrace, looking north.



Aerial view of 59-61 Mason Terrace, looking east.



Aerial view of 59-61 Mason Terrace, looking west.



View of front façade; 59-61 Mason Terrace; taken by staff December 2022



View of left façade; 59-61 Mason Terrace; taken by staff December 2022