

**Executive summary:**

We are writing regarding the screening and placement of existing and proposed electric heat pumps along Clifton Street (northwest) side of 543 Pleasant Street. Members of the Historic District Commission (HDC) visited the site in February 2026 and confirmed firsthand that the northwest Clifton Street wall is the only feasible location for heating equipment.

The **property has no viable alternative fuel source** for heating or domestic hot water. National Grid confirmed in October 2022 that service could not be provided to the property from either Pleasant Street or Clifton Street. After consultations in 2022 with ENE through the Home Energy Assessment process, HDC members, Belmont Town Planning, and Belmont Light, full electrification was identified as the only practical option, with electric heat pumps required for home heating.

Consistent with the HDC Guidelines (p. 39), the heat pumps were installed on the only available elevation and are screened with vegetation, using a combination of deciduous and evergreen plantings and hedging.

**RECEIVED**

*By Office of Building & Planning at 10:32 am, Feb 17, 2026*

Dear Members of the HDC,

This application is submitted in support of the previously approved **HDC-24-01**, which was presented to and unanimously approved by the Commission for the renovation and addition work at **543 Pleasant Street, Belmont**. The work was also approved by the Belmont Planning Board under **Case No. 24-07**, granting two special permits under Sections **1.5.4B** and **4.2** of the By-Law to construct additions at 543 Pleasant Street, again with all members voting in favor.

Existing heat pumps were in place at the time of the HDC's preliminary consultation site visit for what later became the approved HDC-24-01 application, and they were screened with vegetation. In addition, the need for additional electric heating equipment to serve the approved renovation and increased square footage was reviewed and approved through the Planning Board process.

Regrettably, it appears that during the HDC-24-01 Certificate of Appropriateness petition, discussion of the existing heat pumps on the Clifton Street-facing elevation—and the associated equipment upgrades required for the approved addition—was not clearly captured in the meeting record. During the course of the approved HDC and Planning Board renovations, the installation of additional heat pumps and the temporary loss of screening vegetation prompted the Town/HDC to request the submission of this application.

---

## **Background**

**543 Pleasant Street** was built in **1951** on an **11,945 sq. ft.** lot. While the home is not itself a historic structure, it is located within the Pleasant Street Historic District. The owners have therefore consistently sought guidance from both the HDC and the Planning Board to ensure all requirements were met before submitting applications and commencing work.

Although the property appears at first glance to be a corner lot between Pleasant Street and Clifton Street, it has frontage only on **Pleasant Street**. The lot boundary along the Clifton Street side is triangular, running from the Clifton Street crosswalk (southwest) to **15 Clifton Street** (northeast). The rear corner of 543 Pleasant Street is **6.4 feet** from the property line, approximately **45 feet** from Clifton Street (measured parallel to the side façade), and approximately **80 feet** from the neighboring home on Clifton Street, as shown in **Appendix A**.

During the HDC site visit on **February 5, 2026**, members were shown the boundary plot lines, the existing installed heat pump(s), and the additional mechanical equipment

required for the approved renovation and addition. After reviewing the exterior conditions—including the rear deck and setback constraints on the northeast side of the home—HDC members confirmed that the **only feasible equipment location** is on the **northwest (Clifton Street-facing) wall**. Members were also informed that screening vegetation previously existed along the Clifton Street side but succumbed to weather and site conditions; following completion of construction, the owners explained intent to replant screening vegetation in alignment with the HDC Guidelines (p. 39), was already in place with Amazon landscape and construction group.

As stated in the HDC Guidelines (p. 39, Column 1):

*“All modern equipment should be installed in locations that create the least disturbance to the historic appearance of the building, involve the least additional structural alterations and are screened, hidden or otherwise shielded from public view to the greatest extent possible.”*

In addition, the proposed heating equipment consists of **white/cream/light grey Mitsubishi and Bosch units**, which will visually blend with the approved cedar-siding color. The Guidelines further note (p. 39, Column 2):

*“Modern equipment should be painted to blend in with the building and surroundings.”*

---

## **Proposed Screening**

During the site visit, HDC members discussed screening approaches in light of the deck and setback restrictions on the northeast side and rear of the home thus resulting in the need to locate equipment on the only available northwest Clifton Street-facing wall. The following screening options were discussed:

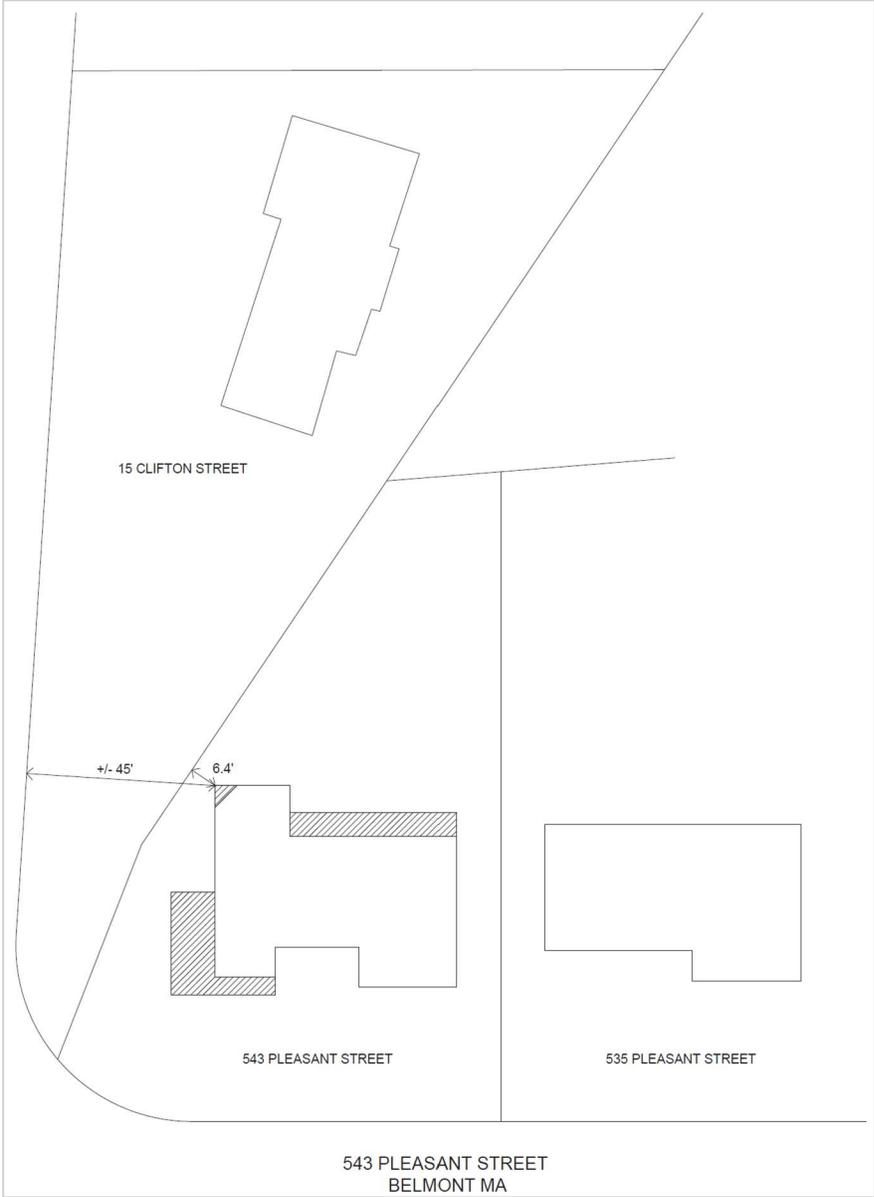
1. **A continuous 6-foot-tall fence** along the property boundary between **15 Clifton Street** and **543 Pleasant Street**, extending from the rear toward the front (Appendix B).
2. **Vegetation/evergreen screening** planted along the boundary line consistent with neighboring hedges, shrubs, and trees typical of the Pleasant Street Historic District (Appendix C).
3. **A wood screening enclosure** approximately **20 feet by 6 feet**, placed **3–4 feet** in front of the forward-facing equipment and color-matched to the siding (Appendix D). Per manufacturer requirements, the screen would include sufficient openings to meet equipment installation and airflow specifications (Appendix E).
4. **A combination** of the above approaches.

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify the current conditions and the context leading to this submission. We also appreciate the guidance provided by both the HDC and the Planning Board before and during the renovation process, as the owners work to bring the home up to current building code and to maintain compatibility with the expectations of the Town of Belmont and the surrounding neighborhood.

Sincerely,  
K.K.Banger, S Kumar

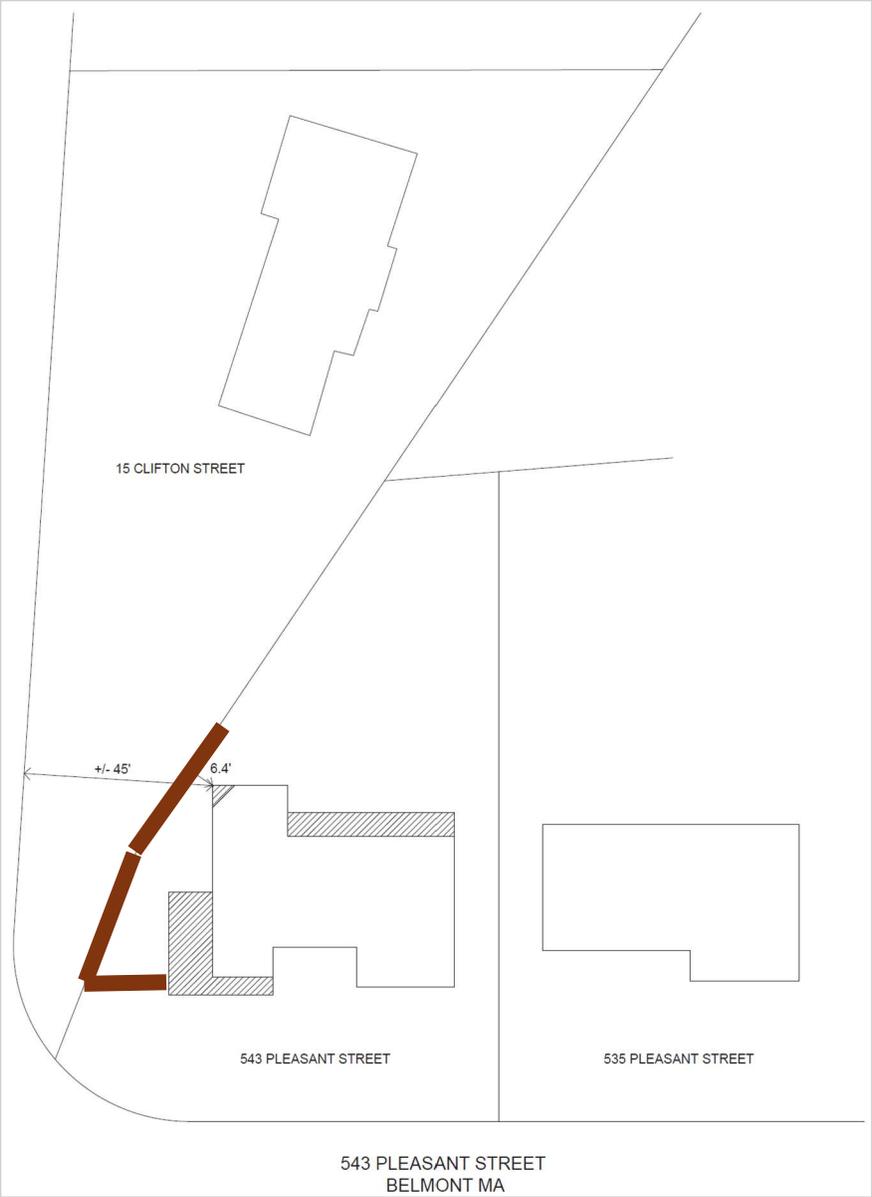


Appendix A continued:



Showing lot is not a corner property

Appendix B location of 6 ft tall fence to screen heating equipment



Material of choice and style would match existing fences in historic area :



Or accepted cedar wood styles such as those by Boston Fence company,

For example, cedar shadow box fence, color to match other neighboring fences.



**Appendix C** Vegetation and evergreen foliage as screening.

3d rendering of potential natural screening



Only hedges: final plant choices decision will be in consult with landscape since past evergreen did not take to soil. First choice is Yew trees which are common in neighboring homes along with evergreen pin trees of various types



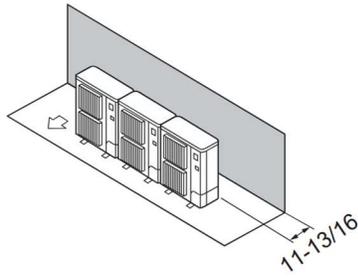
**Appendix D :**

Heat pump screening in front of units color to match will be same as cedar siding. Screening cage would be constructed out of cedar wood. Note upper window omitted in rendering

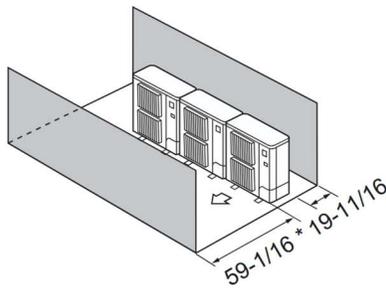


Due to heat pump regulations the screening cage will need to have louvred or slats to prevent airflow reducing heat pump performance see appendix E. Additional the current estimated size is 20 ft long by 3-4 ft wide and 6.5ft height, Material cedar

## Appendix E: heat pump installation guidelines



**Fig. 2-11**



### 2.5.3. When installing multiple outdoor units

Leave 1" (25 mm) space or more between the units.

- ① Obstacles at rear (Fig. 2-11)
- ② Obstacles at rear and above (Fig. 2-12)
  - No more than 3 units must be installed side by side. In addition, leave space as shown.
  - Do not install the optional air outlet guides for upward airflow.
- ③ Obstacles at front (Fig. 2-13)
  - \* When using the optional air outlet guides, the clearance is 39-3/8" (1000 mm) or more.
- ④ Obstacles at front and rear (Fig. 2-14)
  - \* When using the optional air outlet guides, the clearance is 39-3/8" (1000 mm) or more.
- ⑤ Single parallel unit arrangement (Fig. 2-15)
  - \* When using the optional air outlet guides installed for upward airflow, the clearance is 39-3/8" (1000 mm) or more.
- ⑥ Multiple parallel unit arrangement (Fig. 2-16)
  - \* When using the optional air outlet guides installed for upward airflow, the clearance is 59-1/16" (1500 mm) or more.
- ⑦ Stacked unit arrangement (Fig. 2-17)
  - The units can be stacked up to 2 units high.
  - No more than 2 stacked units must be installed side by side. In addition, leave space as shown.