



Recommendations for Air Conditioning and Heat Pump Installations

To ensure that air conditioning systems are installed in a manner that is compatible with the historic architecture of the neighborhood, NABB encourages observance of the following guidelines for new and replacement units in the residential district.

1. The use of central air conditioning systems rather than temporary window units is encouraged. New and replacement equipment shall not exceed the decibel level prescribed for downtown neighborhoods by the City of Boston.
2. The preferred location for air conditioning equipment is on the ultimate roof of the building, with all line sets and wiring internal to the building. In condominium buildings, written approval of the trustees is required.
3. Air conditioning condensers may not be installed in the front of a building, nor on balconies or fire escapes on the front or rear of the building. Wall mounting of such systems on any façade is inappropriate. Condenser systems may be installed on side façades only in those cases where the Back Bay Architectural Commission determines that they will not be visible from the street or alley.
4. The burden of proof rests with the applicant to demonstrate that it is either physically or legally not possible to comply with these guidelines. In cases where it is demonstrated that it is not possible to place the condensers on the ultimate roof:
 - Air conditioning condensers may be placed at ground level at the rear of the building or on the roof of an existing ell if:
 - a. they are not visible from any angle at ground level. (Landscaping, trellis, and/or fencing may be used to screen air conditioning equipment if necessary);
 - b. all wiring, piping, and lines are inside the building rather than on the facade, and
 - c. the sound from the condensers complies with the city's noise ordinances.
 - Air conditioning units may be permanently installed within an existing window in a façade neither facing nor visible at ground level from a public street and minimally visible from an alley if:
 - a. the window opening is unchanged,
 - b. the equipment does not protrude beyond the window frame;
 - c. the equipment is designed, painted, or otherwise treated to blend with the façade and appear similar to other windows openings on the same façade, and
 - d. the sound from the condenser complies with the city's noise ordinances.