

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
POLICY STATEMENT ON SOLAR PANELS

CITY OF NEWPORT

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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By motion of the Historic District Commission at their April 19, 2022 meeting, the following design guidelines and standards were adopted concerning solar panels on properties within Newport's Historic Districts.

References:

- 1) Newport Standards – Ordinance: 17.80.060
- 2) US Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, Technical Preservation Services, Sustainability, New Technology, Solar Panels on Historic Buildings

Solar panels mounted on the roof of a contributing or non-contributing building within a Newport Historic District are typically not allowed. Solar panels added to historic properties can have a significant impact on the character and visual qualities that convey a property's cultural significance. Solar panel installations should not become prominent new elements that detract from the character-defining features of a building or landscape.

Roofs are a character-defining feature of historic buildings both for their slope and gabling, as well as for their material. Historic roofing types like slate, standing-seam metal, wood shingle, and tile are highly significant elements of the buildings in Newport's historic districts and should be preserved.

Therefore, the Historic District Commission establishes the following standard and statement of policy:

For Contributing Buildings and Properties:

1. Solar panels installed on a historic property in a location that cannot be seen from the ground will generally meet Newport's Standards for retaining historic character (**Ordinance: 17.80.060.A.1**). Conversely, an installation that negatively impacts the historic character of a property will not meet the Standards. Every project is different and must be evaluated on its own merit.
2. Solar panels shall not be installed on a roof within a Historic District if it can be seen in any fashion from a street view vantage point.
3. Solar panels shall not be installed on a building's roof, where the roof is considered a character defining feature of the building – due to architectural design and or material (such as slate, standing seam metal, wood shingle, tile or synthetic material intended to replicate natural materials). Nor should solar panels be installed if it requires removing or otherwise altering historic roof configurations, including dormers, chimneys and/or other character defining features.

4. Solar panels installation may be considered on a completely flat roof set back from the edge to minimize visibility. Pitch and elevation should be adjusted to avoid view from the public right-of-way.
5. Solar panels may be considered for installation on a recent addition made to the historic structure where it is obvious the addition is not part of the original historic structure and has not gained historic significance on its own (**Ordinance: 17.80.060.A.3**) and not in public view.

~~6.—6. Freestanding or detached on-site solar panels may be considered and should be installed in locations that minimize visibility from public right of way. These systems should be screened from the public right of way with fencing, shrubbery, or other vegetation. Placement, design, and distance from existing historic structure(s) should not detract from the historic character of the site or destroy historic landscape material or walls. Solar panels may be considered if installed on the property, separate from the historic building (example: pole mounted array), and if it does not interfere with any historic landscaping or walls.~~

~~7.6.~~ Mechanical equipment associated with the photovoltaic system should be unobtrusive as possible and always installed on the rear slope.

For Non-Contributing Buildings and Properties:

1. In cases where the roof gable is a considerably low slope, and the roof is not a prominent feature, solar panels may be installed with minimum view from the street. Panels shall be installed flat on the rear slope and not alter the pitch of the roof.

For all projects, solar panel cut sheets must be provided as part of the application, along with aerial view of panel lay-down, mounting bracket detail and exterior mechanical and battery positioning.

The above criteria are intended as general guidelines to give property owners, architects, builders, and others involved in presenting window and door replacements to the Historic District Commission general awareness of the Commission’s expectations, samples and level of detail. Additional guidance may be found in the Standards and Guidelines for the Newport Local Historic District, (Revised 4.2016)

APPROVED BY RESOLUTION:



4/19/2022

Chair, Historic District Commission

Date