



Solar Panel Installation Guidelines

Designated Landmarks and Historic/Landmark Districts

The Cleveland Landmarks Commission uses the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation to review proposed changes to Designated Cleveland Landmarked properties.

Emerging technology and the desire to create a more sustainable community offers challenges when considering compatibility with our historic structures and districts. While we are charged with maintaining the integrity of these places, we also have to be adaptable to items that can help reduce our carbon footprint. Solar panels have become more affordable and desired as a cost-saving measure, which also decreases dependency on utility companies.

Application/Review Process

Solar panels installation projects include review through the Landmarks Commission office and a permit through the Cleveland Department of Building and Housing.

A roof should be surveyed prior to installation to determine if the roof system can hold the additional weight and that the roof material is appropriate to cover. Decorative shake, tile, or slate roofs in good condition should not be removed for the installation of solar panels.

Solar panel installation projects that adhere to the location recommendations in this guide or are located on secondary structures (garages or sheds), new additions or new construction can be reviewed administratively by Landmarks Commission staff for appropriateness, at the direction of the Landmarks Commission. Otherwise, the proposed installation will need to be reviewed through the Landmarks Commission design review process.

Solar panel installation on main roofs fronting streets (including porch roofs and dormers) are not currently recommended and will require the Landmarks Commission design review process.

Materials

Solar Panels and related equipment should be as non-obtrusive as possible. Panels and frames should be dark and a single color to the best available. Light frames with dark panels or segmented



Appropriately placed solar panels should fit with the existing roof and fade into the background.





panels will draw more attention to the non-historic elements. Any cables and brackets should also be dark in color. It is recommended that a darker colored roof material be installed to help reduce the visual impact. During the consideration of installing the panels, it is recommended that the roof be assessed to ensure that it can hold the additional weight of the system.

Location

The location recommendations identify the preferred installation of solar panels to buildings located in designated Cleveland Landmark Historic Districts or are designated Landmarks. Installation projects that do not fit with the recommended locations but are not visible from the public right of way in front of the building/home may require the Landmarks Commission design review process.

Solar panels should not be seen from the ground. While it may not be possible to eliminate seeing the panels from every angle, it should be the goal to minimize the intrusion of the modern elements. They may be visible but should not be conspicuous and should be a secondary element, not distracting from the main characteristics of the home.



When panels are proposed for the primary structure, the following will be considered for the installation:

- 1) Solar Panels should not be installed on a roof that contributes to the architectural character of the structure.
 - a. Solar panels should not be installed on a street-facing façade or front-facing gables for interior lots and side gables for corner lots.
- 2) Solar Panels should be installed behind or on the rear face of a cross gable.
- 3) Solar panels should be installed in a solid formation without missing panels.
- 4) If Solar Panels are to be installed on a roof without cross-gables, the installation is recommended to be set back from the front a minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the total length of the roof structure.
- 5) Solar panels installed on a flat roof should not be visible above the parapet wall.
- 6) Solar panels should be installed on low-slope roofs if available
- 7) Solar panels should be flush-mounted

While there may be some exceptions, solar panels installed on a secondary structure or on new additions are generally appropriate. These usually fall the rear of the property and unless they contribute to the significance of the property, they offer the best opportunity for adding panels.

Depending on the needs or desires of the homeowner, a smaller collection of panels, in an inconspicuous space would be appropriate on the side of a home.

