Preservation League of NYS

# Small Scale Solar Panel Installation

## (Residential/Commercial)

### Guidelines for Historic Buildings

***Renewable energy is important to a sustainable future, and it is important that while adapting to renewable energy sources, we are sensitive to historic sites that communities cherish.***

When installing solar panels on a historic property, ensure that it will not negatively impact the historic character of the property and that it meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.*

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Locate solar panels so that they are not easily visible from a public right of way.
- Panels should not visibly alter the slope of the roof.
- Locate panels behind existing architectural features such as parapets, dormers, and chimneys when possible.
- Solar panels, mounting systems, and associated mechanicals should be as inconspicuous as possible and be compatible in color to roof materials
- Installation of panels must be reversible and not damage historic materials, such as slate or wood roof shingles.

*Low profile on flat roof, invisible from ground. credit: Daniel Ramirez via @danramarch on Flickr*

*Panels consistent w/existing slope of roof, on elevation not easily visible from public right of way. credit: Peggy Cox via @wcn247 on Flickr*

## ALTERNATIVE SITING

- Solar panels can be located on accessory structures. The general guidelines above should be applied.
- Free-standing solar arrays can be located on the property in locations that minimize visibility from the public right of way and make use of screening such as vegetation and appropriate fencing. The placement and design should be appropriate to the historic character of the site.

*Mounted on an rear accessory structure. credit: Scenic Hudson*

*Freestanding/pole-mounted solar arrays behind accessory structure. credit: Christopher Porter via @canadianveggie on Flickr*

## AVOID

- Mounting panels on the front facade of a structure.
- Removal of historic roofing materials to accommodate installation.
- Altering roof configuration or removing historic features like dormers or chimneys to accommodate solar panels.
- Anything that will cause irreversible damage to historic features.

*Insensitive placement of solar panels on front facade. credit: Jaggery via geograph.org.uk*

**For additional resources, please visit our website at [www.preservenys.org](http://www.preservenys.org)**