



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date	1/8/2024	CCF #231219
Ald. Brostoff	Staff reviewer: Tim Askin	
Property	2015 N. Lake Drive	North Point South HD
Owner/Applicant	John Hambrook	Arch Solar
Proposal	Install solar panels on south roof slope in three distinct arrays.	

Staff comments

The siting and form of this house prevents staff approval of any effective rooftop system. The staff approval guidelines were intended to ease the burden on the commission and owners by making clear rules for properties that can achieve rooftop installations with no significant aesthetic impact. This will never be able to address all historic properties.

Rooftop solar is most effective on south and east slopes that are rarely affected by shadow. This house has negligible east-facing slopes. The garage roof is assumed to have too much shadow. The proposed system meets as the guidelines for edge setbacks and system height. All panels face Windsor Place which is effectively an alley elevation.

With the unusual angle of the street grid, there is no avoiding visibility of a system. Staff considered suggesting elimination of the four easternmost panels. After review of potential sightlines, it was determined that doing so would have no consequential effect on the visibility of the system. Only elimination of the both the front and center arrays would reduce visibility from Lake Drive. This would be over 2/3 of the system and thus is not viable.

The Commission and applicant should discuss options to minimize visibility with the installer and applicant. In the absence of alternatives, staff recommends approval as proposed, as the installation faces an alley and there are no panels directly facing the primary street.

Recommendation

Approve, pending Commission discussion of alternative siting options.

Conditions

Minimum setback from roof edges to be 8". Maximum height of system from roof plane to be 8".