
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	3501 34th Street, NW	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Cleveland Park Historic District	(X) Consent Calendar
		(X) Permit Review
Meeting Date:	April 28, 2022	(X) Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	22-088	New Construction
		Demolition
		Subdivision

Owners Janine Goodman and Gil Strobel, seek permit approval for installation of solar panels on the front and side roof elevations of their house in the Cleveland Park Historic District.

Property Description

3501 34th Street is one in a detached row of four Tudor Revival houses built in 1929, designed by architect George Santmyers, located at the corner of 34th and Ordway Street. It features a prominent half-timbered front-facing gable and a steeply pitched cross gabled slate roof.

Proposal

The plan calls for installing 14 panels on the south side of the front-facing gable and 4 panels on the west front-facing roof. The panels would be installed tight to the roof and would have black frames.

Evaluation

In 2019, the Board adopted its *Sustainability Guide for Older and Historic Buildings*, developed jointly by DOEE and HPO, which included design guidelines for solar installations on historic property. While the guideline encourages locating solar installations on secondary elevations to minimize visibility from public street view, it acknowledges that this may not always be feasible and that visible solar installations are not inherently incompatible. For visible solar installations, the following guidelines are provided:

If visible from public street view, use low-profile panels set flush with the roof and in a complementary color with the roof finish to avoid a discordant appearance.

If it is necessary to install panels on a primary elevation to achieve solar efficiency, installations should be pulled away from roof edges and ridges, compositionally balanced on the roof, and not result in irregular “saw-tooth” compositions. Use low-profile panels set coplanar and flush with the roof, and panel and panel frames that match the color of the surrounding roof. The use of a solar skin or solar shingles that match the texture and appearance of the roof is encouraged.

The applicants’ proposal is consistent with the guidelines. The original slate roof was failing and is in the process of being replaced with a new slate roof that is dark charcoal in color, providing a complementary field color for the panels. The array has been organized to provide offsets from roof edges and ridges (which is already required by the fire code), to avoid saw-tooth edges, and is set flush

with the roof to provide a low profile. By following the guidelines, the panels would not be discordant or incongruous with the building's roof or the streetscape of this block.

When the Board adopted the Sustainability Guide in December 2019, it delegated approval authority to HPO for any visible solar installations on secondary elevations that followed the guidelines but asked that any installations on primary elevations be submitted to it for review. Other than the application for solar panels on the front elevation of 6824 5th Street NW in Takoma Park (approved by the Board in December 2019 and presented upon completion at the October 2021 HPRB meeting of recently completed projects), this is the first application for a solar installation on a primary elevation since the Board adopted the guideline.

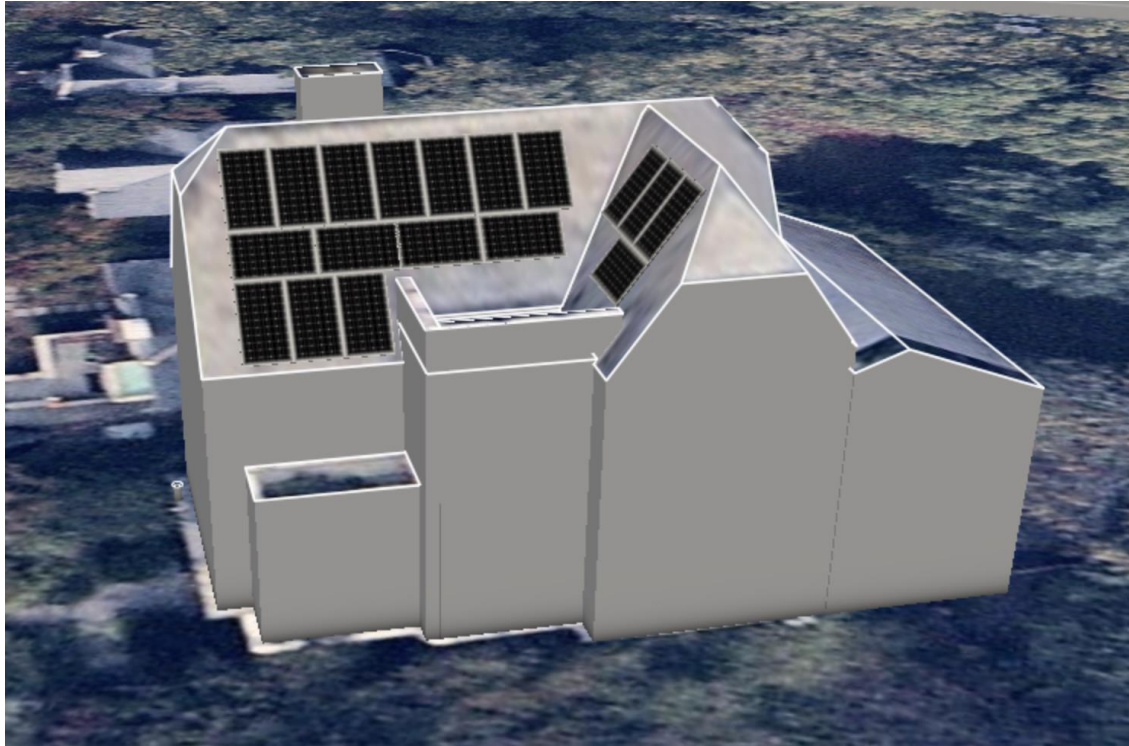
Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the installation of solar panels, as designed, to be consistent with its guidelines and compatible with the character of the Cleveland Park Historic District.

It is also recommended that the HPRB delegate authority to HPO to approve future solar installations on front elevations if they are consistent with the Board's guidelines.



3501 34th Street NW



Proposed solar panel installation, 3501 34th Street NW