STAFF BRIEF

This document is the staff’s comparison of the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts, the Landmark Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 30, Revised Municipal Code) and other applicable adopted area guidelines as applied to the proposed application. It is intended to provide guidance during the commission’s deliberation of the proposed application. Guidelines are available at www.denvergov.org/preservation

Project: 2021-COA-327  
Address: 635 N Williams  
Historic Dist/DLM: East 7th Avenue  
Year structure built: 1996 (Period of Significance: Prior to and including 1943)  
Council District: #10, Chris Hinds  
Applicant: Dianne Betkowski, Chelsea Bours

LPC Meeting: August 3, 2021  
Staff: Becca Dierschow

Project Scope Under Review:
Install 24 solar panels to roof of non-contributing building. Panels to be installed on south, east, and west roof slope.

Staff Summary:
The applicant is proposing to install 24 solar panels to the roof of a noncontributing structure in East 7th Avenue. Four of the panels will be on a street-facing roof slope. The applicant explored putting those panels on the flat portion of the roof, but due to existing mechanical and venting, the panels will not fit. The structure is non-contributing to the East 7th Avenue historic district, as it was constructed in 1996. However, the design guidelines call for changes to non-contributing buildings to conform to prevailing patterns within the historic district to maintain the historic context of the district:

“The guidelines for new construction in this chapter also apply to projects involving an existing non-contributing structure in a historic district. The goal is to ensure that a non-contributing structure continues to fit within the overall guidelines for new construction, meaning that it does not adversely affect the character-defining features of the overall historic district.”

Excerpted from Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts, January 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Meets Guideline?</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GUIDELINES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN NEW CONSTRUCTION 4.32 Ensure that the sustainable design features of a new building are compatible with the historic context. seen in the historic district and surrounding historic context.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The proposed placement of the solar panels does not conform with the placement of panels on historic structures in the neighborhood, being located on the primary façade and highly visible from the street.</td>
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e. Ensure that the placement of solar panels conforms with prevailing patterns in a historic district. Refer to solar placement guidelines and diagrams on pages 39-41

2.33 When installing solar collectors, minimize potential adverse effects on the character of a historic property.

   a. Place collectors in an unobtrusive location on the property, if possible. Such locations may include an addition, garage or secondary structure.
   b. Place collectors to avoid obscuring significant features or adversely affecting the perception of the overall character of the property.
   c. Mount collectors below the ridge line on a sloping roof.
   d. Mount collectors flush, with a minimum rise above the roof plane. This will not cause a significant decrease in the device’s solar gain capabilities.
   e. On a side-facing roof plane of a primary structure, minimize visual impacts by locating solar collectors on the rear 2/3 of the roof length.
   f. Size solar collectors to be subordinate to the historic structure.
   g. Ensure that exposed hardware, frames and piping have a matte finish, and are consistent with the color scheme of the primary structure.
   h. Use the least invasive method feasible to attach solar collectors to a historic roof.
   i. Install solar collectors so they may be readily removed and the original character easily restored.
   j. Minimize adverse impacts on a historic roof structure when installing solar collectors or similar technologies.

Yes/No

The four panels on the east slope of the roof will be highly visible from public vantage points.
The panels on the south roof slope will not be located on the rear 2/3rds of the structure, but due to the shallow pitch of the roof, they will be minimally visible from the street.
The panels will be installed flush with the roof and use specialized mounts to protect the existing tile roof.

Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

Conditions: Remove or relocate the four solar panels on the east roof slope

Basis: The solar panels will conform with prevailing patterns in the historic district (Guideline 4.32) and will be minimally visible from public vantage (guideline 2.33)
Suggested Motion: I move to CONDITIONALLY APPROVE application #2021-COA-327 for the installation of solar panels at 635 N Williams St, as per design guidelines 4.32 and 2.33, presented testimony, submitted documentation and information provided in the staff report with the condition to remove or relocate the four solar panels on the east roof slope.

East 7th Avenue historic district with 635 N Williams outlined in blue.