



STAFF REPORT

Historic Preservation Commission

March 6, 2024

HPCA-23-00157

Case Number: HPCA-23-00157

Property Address: 225 NW 27th Street

District: Jefferson Park Historic District

Applicant: My Roof Solar
Sina Redin
810 W Robinson Street
Norman, OK 73069

Owner: Maria Claravall
225 NW 27th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73103

A. CASE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Install solar panels and related mechanical equipment (elective).

B. BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

This project was reviewed by the Commission previously, at its January 3, 2024 meeting. The project proposed solar panels on both the east and west slopes of the roof of the primary building. Eighteen panels were proposed.

The proposal has been revised to push the solar panels north, beyond the southernmost, west side gable of the primary building, and remove panels from the east slope of the primary building. The new proposal provides solar panels on only the west slope of the dwelling, and the east slope of the accessory building roof. Eighteen panels are proposed. Mechanical equipment is proposed on the south façade of the accessory building and the north façade of the primary building.

2. Location

Project site is located on the north side of NW 27th Street, across from Goodholm Park, between Robinson and Harvey Avenues.

3. Site History

Date of Construction: 1918

Zoned Historic Preservation/Historical Landmark: 1998

National Register Listing: 1995

Description from National Register Nomination Intensive Level Survey:

225 Northwest 27th, 1919. This is a one-story Bungalow/Craftsman frame house with a moderate pitched roof, exposed rafter tails, a center gablet, and an open porch gable. Porch beams are supported by three square wood columns on stone slabs on brick piers, connected by a decorative low brick wall. A porte-cochere has two massive square brick columns with low brick walls between them. The porte-cochere roof is non-original. There is an overhead door at the north end, underneath the porte-cochere. The exterior is sheathed with weatherboard.

Additional Information:

The 1922 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps illustrates a 1-story frame dwelling, with a 1-story front porch extending nearly the entire length of the front (south) façade. A 1-story frame “autohouse” is indicated toward the easternmost property line, with the front face back nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the property depth from the front property line. Subsequent editions of the maps illustrate no substantial changes.

Oklahoma County Assessor records do not reflect an accessory structure at this time. Aerial photographs do illustrate an accessory structure in the approximate location of the historic autohouse.

4. Existing Conditions

The dwelling appears consistent with illustrations of the Sanborn maps. The porte-cochere is not inconsistent with other similar structures, but the previous lack of paint at the full-height brick columns may suggest a possible later installation, though the brickwork and concrete cap match that of the front porch piers. An overhead door occupies the north end of the porte-cochere. The roof is a single layer of composition shingle. The form of the roof and footprint of the dwelling are consistent with typical craftsman style bungalows of the area.

5. Previous Actions

Previous applications for Historic Preservation Certificate of Appropriateness (HPCA) filed for this property include:

Case Number	Date	Owner	Decision
HPCA-13-00168	10/09/2013	Maria Claravall	Approved
Replace wood shingles and top layers of comp shingles with architectural grade shingles and install roof vents.			

Other actions, such as variances, other approvals, citations could also be described here.

C. ITEMS IN COMPLIANCE

*Unless noted below in Section D., Issues and Considerations, all other case items of this proposal comply with the Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts, and with all relevant sections of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, 2020.**

None.

D. ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

This proposal may not comply with the Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts, and with all relevant sections of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, 2020 as referenced below:*

1. Item 1, Install solar panels and related mechanical equipment (elective).

- a. Description: The applicant proposes the installation of solar panels and related mechanical equipment. Mechanical equipment is proposed on the rear wall of the dwelling and the south wall of the accessory structure, while solar panels are proposed on the west side facing slope of the the dwelling roof and the east side slope of the accessory structure. Solar panels are black.
- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

2.4 Service and Mechanical Areas

Policy: Mechanical equipment, such as HVAC units and satellite dishes, should be located out of public view. They should be screened with landscaping (best) or fencing (acceptable).

Design Justification: Most mechanical units and equipment are non-historic additions to buildings, and the effect of their visual impact on a property's or district's historic character should be minimized.

- 2.4.2: Mechanical equipment must not be located in public view. Equipment must be screened.
- 2.4.4: Service equipment (including ground mounted solar collectors), mechanical areas and trash receptacles, if proposed, must be screened from the street and other pedestrian areas. Loading areas should be located away from primary facades and be well maintained.

3.7 Roofs

Policy: Retain original roof shape, details, and materials when possible. When replacing roofing materials, consider the energy used in their manufacture and transportation, the reflectivity of the material and whether the material derives from a renewable or recyclable resource.

Design Justification: By their shape, features, materials and details, roofs contribute significantly to the historic character of residential and multi-family buildings. Historic roof materials are usually related to the architectural age and style of the main building. Through variations in line, pitch and overhang, a historic roof can also reveal changes and additions to historic buildings over time. Chimneys, dormers and other roof features add to the diversity and character of historic buildings.

- 3.7.3: Preserve the original shape, line, pitch and overhang of historic roofs, as well as architectural features such as dormers, chimneys and turrets.
- 3.7.7: Repairs to flashing must be copper or other metal with a finish to match

the roof color. Unfinished, galvanized metal flashing shall not be used.

- 3.7.14: New roof features such as roof ventilators, antennas, satellite dishes and skylights may be installed, but must be located on back slopes and not visible from the public right-of-way. Solar panels and solar shingles may also be installed on back roof slopes as long as they are not visible from the public right-of-way.
- 3.7.26: The original shape, line, pitch and overhang of historic roofs are significant to the overall character of the building and must be retained.
- 4.5.14: If mechanical equipment, skylights or solar panels are placed on the roof of an accessory building, they should be set back or screened so that they are not visible to a person standing at ground level on the opposite side of an adjacent street or public right-of-way.

4.7 Features for Improving Energy Efficiency in New Construction

- 4.7.4: Solar panels and solar shingles must be installed on back facing roof slopes and lay flat on the roof slope. They must not be visible from the public right-of-way or from streets including side streets for corner or interior lots.
- 4.7.5: Southern exposures receive sunlight during the entire day, making them the ideal location for solar panels or shingles. However, solar panels and shingles are not permitted for the front (south) roof slope of south-facing buildings. Solar panels and solar shingles are better suited for north-facing buildings whose south-facing roof slope is only visible from the back yard.
- 4.7.6: Solar panels for south-facing buildings are encouraged as free-standing solar panels installed in a back yard and out of public view.
- 4.7.7: Solar panels may be installed in back yards, as long as the height of the panel and the mounting system combined is less than six feet tall and they are not visible from the public right-of-way and adjacent properties.

- c. Considerations: The proposed mechanical equipment is located in the back yard and appears to be screened from view. However, the Standards and Guidelines indicate that new roof mounted features on historic dwellings must be located on back facing slopes and not visible from the public right-of-way.

The Guidelines and Standards further address solar panels at new construction, but continue to maintain that the components must be installed on rear facing slopes and not visible from the street or public rights of way. Subchapter 4.7 further indicates that back yard, ground mounted systems may be appropriate where not visible from the public rights of way. Though this is stated under the Chapter for new construction, it is presumed applicable for back yards at historic structures as well. Structures to this west of the subject property block the view of the back yard.

Rear facing slopes are limited to small side gables at this property, and the solar panels are proposed on the larger side facing slopes of the roofs rather than rear facing slopes. Those panels proposed on the accessory structure do not appear to be visible from the public rights of way, while those at the primary building appear minimally visible on

the west.

The slopes of the roofs of the bungalow are shallow, and the gables provide only limited screening of the west sloping roof. The positioning of the dwelling - forward of all other structures on the curve- also provides a more visible expanse of roof. Additionally, the meandering intersection of Harvey Avenue and NW 27th Street provides a more expansive view of the sight than tighter intersections and equally set fronts. The bungalow style homes, the park-like feel, and large street trees provide for a type of sustainable cooling in the form of shade and good airflow, but do not necessarily lend themselves to supporting the introduction of solar panels.

There are trees present, both large to the west and smaller on the south. Though trees are unreliable screening, particularly deciduous trees, and particularly when solar energy is the goal, the current existence of a small tree in the front yard does provide some screening of the western slope of the roof beyond the gables, as viewed by pedestrians in the public rights of way. Taller, older trees to the west, with higher branches, may provide less screening for pedestrians.

Utilization of the accessory structure north of the primary dwelling that is not visible from the public rights of way or beyond the porte-cochere is an excellent alternative to the previously proposed panels on the east slope of the dwelling. The historically forward placement of the dwelling may also offer opportunities for a solar installation in the back yard, which offers more open space than any other property along the block.

That this proposal is unique in that every effort has been made to minimize the visibility of the proposed solar on the existing buildings, while acquiring that which is necessary to make installation beneficial to the home owner. Sections have been moved to the secondary building, and the remaining panels have been placed as far back on the side as possible. Existing landscaping is proposed to remain.

d. Recommended Specific Findings:

1. That solar panels must be installed on back roof slopes;
2. That solar panels must not be visible from the public rights of way;
3. That the forward placement of the dwelling may offer an opportunity for back yard placement that will not be visible from the public rights of way; and
4. That related mechanical or electrical equipment located in the back and out of public view is an appropriate treatment.

E. HPCA-23-00157 STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. **Approve Item 1, install solar panels and related equipment, with unique circumstances, and** with the specific findings that the proposed work will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property; that the following **unique circumstances** exist: that the items do not strictly comply with all relevant Standards and Guidelines or are not addressed by them, but are nonetheless consistent with the spirit and intent of the Standards and Guidelines and are in compliance with the relevant sections of the Municipal Code, 2020*, as referenced in the Staff Report..

Specific Findings:

1. That solar panels must be installed on back roof slopes;
2. That solar panels must not be visible from the public rights of way;
3. That the forward placement of the dwelling may offer an opportunity for back yard placement that will not be visible from the public rights of way; and
4. That related mechanical or electrical equipment located in the back and out of public view is an appropriate treatment.

Unique Circumstance(s):

1. That this proposal is unique in that every effort has been made to minimize the visibility of the proposed solar on the existing buildings while acquiring that which is necessary to make installation beneficial to the home owner, including relocating several sections to the secondary structure and moving remaining sections as far north as possible.

Note: Staff recommendation does not constitute Commission action.

**Relevant Sections of Chapter 59 the Oklahoma City Municipal Code governing HP/HL Districts are: §59.3300.1-5; §59.4150.4; §59.4250; §59.7250.1-4; §59.7300.1-7; §59.12200.1-4; §59.13300.1-6.*

Copies of the Standards/Guidelines and Relevant Sections of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, 2020, are available online at www.okc.gov/planning/hp/index.html ; at Planning Department offices located at 420 W. Main, 9th floor, and each HP Commission Meeting.

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