



Historic Review
Staff Report for a Solar Installation on a Designated Historic Site
in the McLoughlin Conservation District
May 17, 2024

FILE NO.: GLUA-24-00006 and HR 24-00005: Historic Review

HEARING DATE: May 28, 2024

APPLICANT: ION Solar Inc
4801 N University Ave, Unit 900
Provo, Utah 84604

OWNER: Teri Poppono
720 11th St
Oregon City, OR 97045

LOCATION: 720 11th St
Oregon City, OR 97045

REQUEST: Historic Review for solar panel installation on street-facing roof planes on the James and Sarah Roake House, a designated structure in the McLoughlin Conservation District.

REVIEWER: Jude Thaddaeus, Assistant Planner

RECOMMENDATION: Direction Requested concerning Approval with Conditions

CRITERIA: Administration and Procedures are set forth in Chapter 17.50, Historic Overlay District in Chapter 17.40, of the Oregon City Municipal Code. The City Code Book is available on-line at www.orcity.org.

Please be advised that any issue that is intended to provide a basis for appeal must be raised before the close of the hearing, in person or by letter, with sufficient specificity to afford the Historic Review Board and the parties an opportunity to respond to the issue. Failure to raise an issue with sufficient specificity will preclude any appeal on that issue. The decision of the Historic Review Board may be appealed to the City Commission by parties with standing within fourteen (14) calendar days of the notice of decision. Any appeal will be based on the record. The procedures that govern the hearing will be posted at the hearing and are found in OCMC Chapter 17.50 and ORS 197.763. A city-recognized neighborhood association requesting an appeal fee waiver pursuant to OCMC 17.50.290(C) must officially approve the request through a vote of its general membership or board at a duly announced meeting prior to the filing of an appeal.

Summary and Recommended Conditions of Approval

The James and Sarah Roake House at 720 11th Street is a two-story ca. 1890 Queen Anne with a gable roof, a tower dormer window with a pyramidal roof, and an L-shaped floorplan. The home has modest Queen Anne-style ornamentation and a moderately pitched roof.

The proposed solar array configuration involves the placement of 9 panels covering 12.4% of the structure's roof surface. Seven of the nine panels are proposed to be located on the southwestern roof plane – the roof plane with the highest solar irradiance – two floors above grade. Two panels are proposed along the northwest-facing roof gable, a roof plane with significantly lower solar irradiance.

Historic Review Board Policy 12 for solar panel installations recommends that solar panels be placed on “secondary roof planes.” In the case of the James and Sarah Roake House, Staff is seeking direction from the Historic Review Board as to whether the proposed solar panel configuration on the northwest-facing 2nd story gable visible from 11th St meets that standard, or recommend an alternative configuration that might meet the standard in this case.

Because of the structure's corner lot location, all nine panels would be visible from either the lot's street frontage, or 10th Street above and behind the home. All roof planes are visible from either 11th Street, Jefferson Street, or 10th Street, which sits approximately 40 feet higher in altitude than 11th Street below.

As energy prices rise and renewable technology becomes more affordable, more common, and more critical to society's response to climate change, the Board will have to balance these factors with the concerns of historic integrity. Because the panels are only placed on the roof and will not cover or destroy historical materials or features and are designed to be removed in the future without causing irreparable damage to the structure, the Board may find that the panels will not affect the integrity of the structure.

The proposal should limit retrofitting measures to those that achieve reasonable energy savings, at reasonable costs, with the least intrusion or impact on the character of the building.

If the Board finds that the proposal will impact the historic integrity of the home, the proposal's impacts may be mitigated by limiting the number of panels on the 11th Street facing roof plane or moving them to an alternative location. If the Board finds that the proposed configuration does not adversely impact the landmark, Staff recommends the Board adopt the following Conditions of Approval.

Prior to issuance of Building Permits:

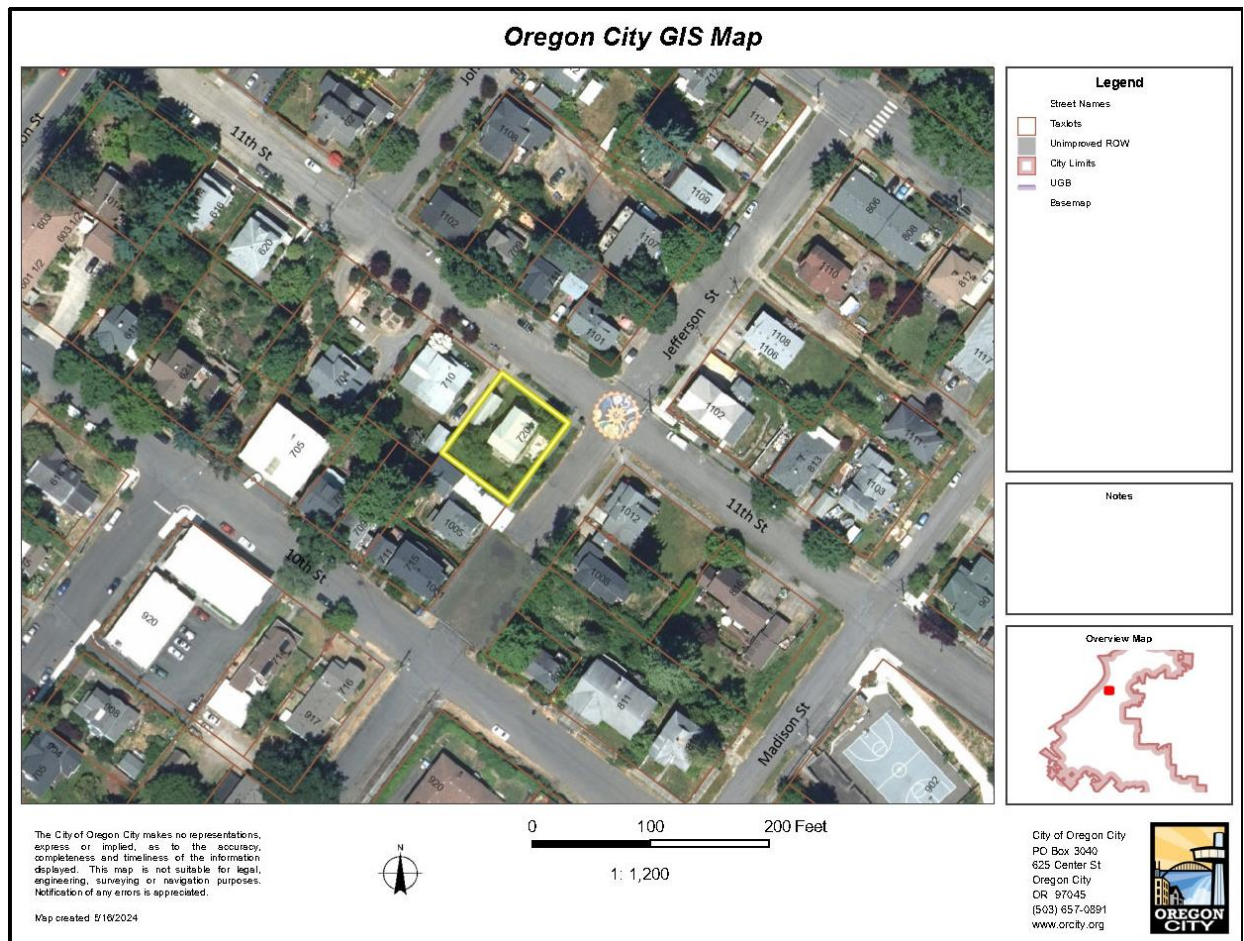
1. The applicant shall submit documentation showing that the panels will be no more than 5” above the roof surface.
2. The applicant shall submit documentation confirming that the number and location of the 11th Street-facing solar panels is either necessary for the viability of the project, or an alternative solar panel configuration on other roof surfaces that meet Historic Review Board standards.
3. The panel frames shall be black, no unfinished/shiny metal frames or visible parts are permitted.

4. Ground- or wall-mounted equipment shall not obscure any architectural features and shall not be installed in a manner that destroys historic millwork or other historic materials. The applicant shall submit a sketch or mock-up of the equipment placement to staff to demonstrate compliance with this condition.
5. The applicant shall ensure that the ground-mounted equipment is blocked from pedestrian view by the use of fencing or landscaping.

I. BACKGROUND:

Site and Context

The subject property is the James and Sarah Roake House a c.1890 Queen Anne-style home fronting 11th Street to the northeast and Jefferson Street to the southeast. in the McLoughlin Conservation District.



Vicinity Map



Street view – front façade from 11th St.



Street view – corner side façade from Jefferson St.

Historic Resource

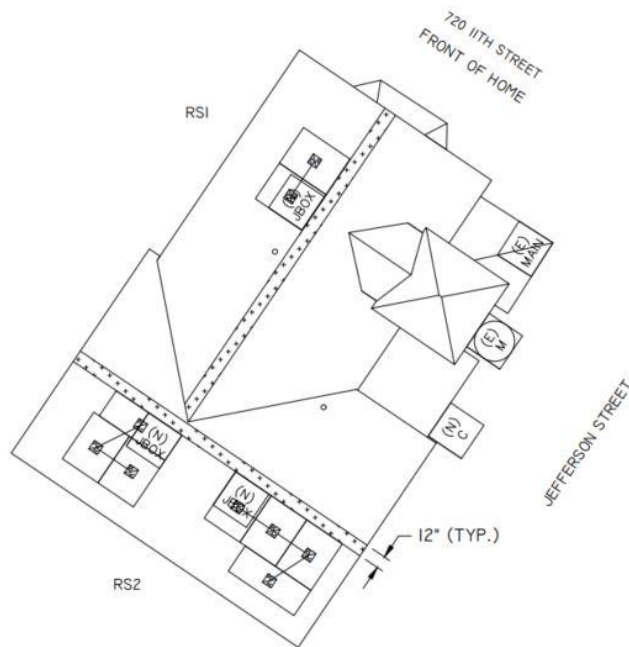
James and Sarah Roake House – 720 11th Street (1890)

Description of Physical and Landscape Features:

This two-story Queen Anne house sits under a gable roof with an L-shaped plan. A rectangular tower is present at the inside corner of the L, topped by a steep pyramidal roof. The house has modest Queen Anne ornamentation, with coved imbrications at the gable ends above a belt course that is a continuation of the frieze and rake boards on the house. Below the shingled gable ends, the house is clad with horizontal V groove drop siding, finished with cornerboards. A small porch is present on the northeast corner of the house, with a hip roof supported by a single turned column. Two engaged turned

columns frame the porch. An octagonal bay is present on the north side of the house, just west of the porch. The area beneath the windows in the bay contains recessed panels above the full water table that encircles the house. The windows are all 1/1 double-hung wood sash with board trim and decorative hood and apron moldings. The eaves are enclosed, and feature round galvanized gutters. A small garage, built recently, is located just west of the house. It sits under a gable roof, and is clad with board and batten siding with imbrications matching the house in the gable ends.

Statement of Significance: In 1891, James and Sarah Roake purchased this property. Mr. Roake operated a sulfur mill in Oregon City, which was destroyed by the 1890 flood. After recovering his losses, he established the Oregon City Foundry, which his son John Albert Roake (903 Madison Street) developed into a large city business. The Foundry operated for three generations before finally closing in the 1950s. The Roakes continued to own this property until 1933, when it was sold to John and Ivy Crawford. John was a carpenter at the CWP Company, whi in 1944 transferred the house to another CWP employee, Frank Fisher and his wife Delia, a musician. Mrs. Fisher continued to occupy the residence following her husband's death in the mid-1950s. In 1964, she sold the house to Arba and Gertrude McPaul, a retired couple who resided in the house until 1971.



Proposed roof and mechanical equipment plan

Project Description:

The applicant has proposed to place nine solar panels on two of the roof planes of the historic structure. In 2019, the City adopted an HRB Policy for solar technology on historic homes, which allowed solar panels without HRB review if the panels met the following standards:

- Sloped roof location: Solar panels are permitted on secondary facades of historic buildings and on accessory structures.
- Design: Panels on sloped roofs shall project five inches or less from the roof surface and be installed flat; they shall not alter the slope of the roof.
- Color: Panels and mounting systems shall be the same color as established roof materials.
- Mechanical equipment associated with the photovoltaic system shall be as unobtrusive as possible.



The panels proposed on this home are proposed on the rear side and front-facing roof slopes and placed such that they will be visible when viewing the primary façade of the house from the right of way. Thus, staff was unable to make a finding that the two panels located on the northwest-facing gable along the primary 11th Street façade were on a secondary façade. Therefore, HRB review is required for this proposal.

The location of the panels is a key factor in determining whether they will impact the historic character of the home. The Secretary of Interior Standards has generally been applied to allow solar equipment that is minimally visible and/or on secondary portions of structures or sites (see Exhibit 5). The federal guidance provides some examples, including the “Vermont residence”, where panels are placed atop a low-pitch gable roof on a 3-story building. “Though visible, these few panels have relatively little impact on the historic character of the property. However, if the roof had been a more prominent feature of the property, this installation may not have been appropriate.”

Zoning:

The property is zoned R-6 Low-Density Residential District and designated as Low-Density Residential in the Oregon City Comprehensive Plan.

Notice and Public Comment:

Public notices were mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the subject site, posted on the subject site, and published on the City website at the following link:

Public comments that were received are summarized below and responded to within this staff report.

1. The Oregon City Building Division indicated that the proposal does not conflict with their interests.

CODE RESPONSES:

17.40.060 - Exterior alteration and new construction.

- A. *Except as provided pursuant to subsection I of this section, no person shall alter any historic site in such a manner as to affect its exterior appearance, nor shall there be any new construction in an historic district, conservation district, historic corridor, or on a landmark site, unless a certificate of appropriateness has previously been issued by the historic review board. Any building addition that is*

thirty percent or more in area of the historic building (be it individual or cumulative) shall be considered new construction in a district. Further, no major public improvements shall be made in the district unless approved by the board and given a certificate of appropriateness.

Finding: Applicable: The proposal for exterior alteration on a designated historic structure is being reviewed by the Historic Review Board.

B. Application for such a certificate shall be made to the planning staff and shall be referred to the historic review board. The application shall be in such form and detail as the board prescribes.

Finding: Complies as Proposed: The applicant submitted the required materials.

C. Archeological Monitoring Recommendation. For all projects that will involve ground disturbance, the applicant shall provide,

- 1. A letter or email from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office Archaeological Division indicating the level of recommended archeological monitoring on-site, or demonstrate that the applicant had notified the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and that the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office had not commented within forty-five days of notification by the applicant; and*
- 2. A letter or email from the applicable tribal cultural resource representative of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation indicating the level of recommended archeological monitoring on-site, or demonstrate that the applicant had notified the applicable tribal cultural resource representative and that the applicable tribal cultural resource representative had not commented within forty-five days of notification by the applicant.*

If, after forty-five days' notice from the applicant, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office or the applicable tribal cultural resource representative fails to provide comment, the city will not require the letter or email as part of the completeness review. For the purpose of this section, ground disturbance is defined as the movement of native soils.

Finding: Not Applicable. The project does not include disturbance of native soils.

D. The historic review board, after notice and public hearing held pursuant to Chapter 17.50, shall approve the issuance, approve the issuance with conditions or disapprove issuance of the certificate of appropriateness.

Finding: Applicable: The proposal is being reviewed by the Historic Review Board.

E. The following exterior alterations to historic sites may be subject to administrative approval:
a. Work that conforms to the adopted Historic Review Board Policies.

Finding: Not Applicable: The proposal is not subject to administrative approval.

F. For exterior alterations of historic sites in an historic district or conservation district or individual landmark, the criteria to be used by the board in reaching its decision on the certificate of appropriateness shall be:

- 1. The purpose of the historic overlay district as set forth in [Section 17.40.010](#);*

OCMC 17.40.010:

It is declared as a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements of special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of the health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people. The purpose of this chapter is to:

- A. Effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of such improvements and of districts which represent or reflect elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history;*
- B. Safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic and cultural heritage as embodied and reflected in such improvements and districts;*
- C. Complement any National Register Historic districts designated in the city;*
- D. Stabilize and improve property values in such districts;*
- E. Foster civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past;*
- F. Protect and enhance the city's attractions to tourists and visitors and the support and stimulus to business and industry thereby provided;*
- G. Strengthen the economy of the city;*
- H. Promote the use of historic districts and landmarks for the education, pleasure, energy conservation, housing and public welfare of the city; and*
- I. Carry out the provisions of LCDC Goal 5.*

Finding: Complies with Condition. Staff finds that the addition of solar panels on the property will improve property value and support the goals for energy conservation and economy. The location of the panels given the lot and streetscape configuration are the key factors determining whether they will impact the historic character of the home.

Staff seeks direction from the Historic Review Board as to whether it is possible, likely and reasonable that the applicant can meet HRB Policy 12 standards through the recommended Conditions of Approval.

2. *The provisions of the city comprehensive plan;*

Finding: Complies with Condition.

There are a few goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan that pertain to this proposal:



Subject site solar irradiance study

Goal 2, Policy 2.3.C:

Encourage property owners to preserve historic structures in a state as close to their original construction as possible while allowing the structure to be used in an economically viable manner.

Goal 4, Policy 4.2.C:

Encourage siting and construction of new development to take advantage of solar energy, minimize energy usage, and maximize opportunities for public transit.

The Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies, at first glance, appear to be somewhat conflicting in this case; calling for the preservation of historic structures, while allowing them to be used in an economically viable manner. The Comprehensive plan also calls out siting and construction of new development to take advantage of solar energy. The historic structure in question has been deemed non-contributing and severely altered and retains few of its original characteristics.

Staff is seeking direction from the Historic Review Board on whether – and under what circumstances – these two Comprehensive Plan Goals already either,

1. Fit together in this proposal, thus allowing for placement of solar panels on the street-facing, most solar irradiant roof section of the home, OR
2. Must be reconciled through an alternative solar array configuration.

Staff has determined that it is possible, likely, and reasonable that the applicant can meet these standards through the Conditions of Approval.

3. *The economic use of the historic site and the reasonableness of the proposed alteration and their relationship to the public interest in the structure's or landmark's preservation or renovation;*

Finding: Complies with Condition: The site is used as a residence and the use is not proposed to change. The public interest in the structure's preservation is preserving the Queen Anne architecture and historic character of the house, which is made up of its historic materials and design. Staff has determined that it is possible, likely and reasonable that the applicant can meet this standard through the Conditions of Approval.

4. The value and significance of the historic site;

Finding: Complies with Condition: The value and significance of the historic site is the age of the structure, its distinctive ca. 1890 Queen Anne features, its location in the McLoughlin Conservation District, and its visual prominence in its immediate vicinity. Staff has determined that it is possible, likely and reasonable that the applicant can meet this standard through the recommended Conditions of Approval.

5. *The physical condition of the historic site*

Finding: Complies as Proposed. The landmark is in good condition and the proposal for solar energy may help prolong and support the continued use of the property as a historic landmark.

6. The general compatibility of exterior design, arrangement, proportion, detail, scale, color, texture and materials proposed to be used with the historic site;

Finding: Complies with Condition: The James and Sarah Roake House is a Queen Anne-style structure with a moderately pitched gable roof and cross gable located 2 stories above street grade. The roof on the structure is a dark composition shingle. A total of 9 panels are proposed, with 2 on the street-facing roof planes. All panels would be visible from the street frontage.

The Board has approved panels facing the street and visible from the right of way in the past, as long as they were not distracting from or too prominently visible when viewing the primary façade or entryway of the structure. The panels proposed on the James and Sarah Roake House will be visible from the right-of-way, albeit substantially higher than the typical pedestrian view.

If the Board finds that these panels will impact this historic integrity of the home as proposed, the circumstance may be mitigated by limiting the number of panels on the upper roof plane, or moving the panels to the next most viable and irradiant roof planes.

7. Pertinent aesthetic factors as designated by the board;

Finding: Complies as Proposed. Staff does not suggest consideration of any aesthetic factors other than those already reflected in the code.



Subject site looking South from 11th St (1st image), Northeast from Jefferson St (2nd image), and North from the intersection of 10th & Jefferson St.

8. *Economic, social, environmental and energy consequences;*

Finding: Complies as Proposed. The home value may be increased, and its CO2 emissions will decrease. The consequences of the proposal are positive to the economy, environment, and energy conservation. Social impacts are inconsequential.

9. *Design guidelines adopted by the historic review board.*

Finding: Complies with Condition: The following design guidelines from the City's Design Guidelines for Alterations, which include the Secretary of Interior Standards, are applicable to this proposal:

Secretary of Interior Standard #2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

No distinctive materials will be removed. A small portion of the total roof area will be covered, but not altered.

Secretary of Interior Standard #9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Staff finds that the alterations would not destroy historic materials, features, or spatial relationships.

Compatibility with massing is not applicable; the proposal will not alter the massing of the structure. Compatibility of the proposal with historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion is as follows:

Compatibility with Historic Materials: The smooth, black, shiny panel would be placed over the gray composition roof. The material is modern but is not necessarily incompatible. Composition shingles are not a historic feature but are typical of both historic and new roofs. Staff recommends conditions of approval to ensure the panels are low profile and no unfinished, shiny metal is used on the panel frames.

Compatibility with Historical Features: The panels would be placed on the low-pitch roof on a house sited 10-12 feet above the sidewalk grade. The panels would not alter the pitch of the roof but would change the appearance of the roof and would be visible from the street. Generally, the Secretary of Interior Standards have been applied to find that roof-mounted solar panels may be compatible if they are on a rear-facing area, are minimally visible, or on a new addition to a historic building.

Compatibility with Size/Scale/Proportion: The size and proportion of the panels appear to be uniformly rectangular. Staff recommends conditions of approval to ensure the panels are low profile and no unfinished, shiny metal is used on the panel frames.

Secretary of Interior Standard #10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The applicant did not provide a detailed response to this criterion. If approved, a condition of approval is recommended requiring that ground- or wall-mounted equipment not obscure any architectural features and shall not be installed in a manner that destroys historic millwork or other historic materials. The applicant should be required to submit a sketch or mock-up of the equipment placement to staff to demonstrate compliance with this condition, if approved.

Oregon City Guideline: Traditional landscape elements evident in the District (grass, trees, shrubs, picket fences, etc.) should be preserved, and are encouraged in site redevelopment. Inappropriate landscape treatments such as berms and extensive non- vegetative ground cover (e.g. mulch and bark dust) are discouraged.

Finding: Not Applicable. The applicant has not proposed removing any significant landscaping or trees on the site or in the district.

Staff has determined that it is possible, likely, and reasonable that the applicant can meet this standard through the Conditions of Approval.

17.40.065 - Historic Preservation Incentives.

A. Purpose. *Historic preservation incentives increase the potential for historically designated properties to be used, protected, renovated, and preserved. Incentives make preservation more attractive to owners of locally designated structures because they provide flexibility and economic opportunities.*

B. Eligibility for Historic Preservation Incentives. *All exterior alterations of designated structures and new construction in historic and conservation districts are eligible for historic preservation incentives if the exterior alteration or new construction has received a certificate of appropriateness from the Historic Review Board per OCMC 17.50.110(c).*

C. Incentives Allowed. *The dimensional standards of the underlying zone as well as for accessory buildings (OCMC 17.54.100) may be adjusted to allow for compatible development if the expansion or new construction is approved through historic design review.*

D. Process. *The applicant must request the incentive at the time of application to the Historic Review Board.*

Finding: Not Applicable: No incentives are proposed.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the aforementioned findings, Staff is seeking direction from the Historic Review Board to determine if GLUA-24-00006 / HR-24-00005, as proposed, does or does not adversely affect the historic resource for the James and Sarah Roake House located at 720 11th St, Oregon City, Oregon 97045. If the proposed configuration is determined to adversely impact the historic resource, Staff seeks direction from the Historic Review Board to request an alternative configuration for review and approval.

Exhibits

1. Applicant Submittal
2. Solar Irradiance Report
3. Historic Inventory Form
4. [Secretary of Interior Guidance on Solar Panels](#) (link)