



City of Stone Mountain  
875 Main Street  
Stone Mountain, GA 30083

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## **STAFF ANALYSIS AND REPORT**

**To:** City of Stone Mountain Mayor & City Council

**From:** Richard Edwards, AICP

**Subject:** Proposed update to the Historic District Design Guidelines to include guidelines on the installation of solar panels.

**Date:** March 4, 2025

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this staff report and analysis is to present the proposed updates to the Historic District Design Guidelines to include guidelines on the installation of solar panels.

**Background:**

The City of Stone Mountain's Historic District Design Guidelines do not currently address solar panels for installation on historic properties. The city has seen an increase in the number of Certificates of Appropriateness for solar panels for residential properties.

These updates are based on best practices as provided by the United States Department of the Interior. Staff has worked closely with the Historic Preservation Commission to make these recommendations unique to the City of Stone Mountain. The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed these guidelines at their December and January meetings and have recommended approval to the City Council for these proposed updates.

These updates only include the addition of Section 5.12 for residential properties and Section 6.13 for commercial properties.

## 5.12 Solar Panels

- 5.12.1 Utilization of low-profile solar panels are recommended. Solar shingles, laminates, glazing, or similar materials are not recommended to replace original or historic materials. Use of solar systems in windows or on walls, siding, and shutters should be avoided.
- 5.12.2 Panels should be installed flat and not alter the slope of the roof. Installation of panels must be reversible and not damage the historic integrity of the resource and district.
- 5.12.3 Solar panels should be positioned behind existing architectural features such as parapets, dormers, and chimneys to limit their visibility.
- 5.12.4 Solar panels should be installed on rear slopes or other locations not easily visible from the public right-of-way.
- 5.12.5 Use solar panels and mounting systems that are compatible in color to established roof materials.
- 5.12.6 Solar panels installed on flat roof structures should be setback from the roof edge to minimize visibility. Pitch and elevation should be adjusted to reduce visibility from the public right-of-way.
- 5.12.7 Mechanical equipment associated with the photovoltaic system should be treated to be as unobtrusive as possible. These systems should be screened from the public right-of-way with materials elsewhere in the district such as fencing or vegetation of suitable scale for the district and setting.
- 5.12.8 Freestanding or detached on-site solar panels should be installed in locations that minimize visibility from the public right-of-way. These systems should be screened from the public right-of-way with materials elsewhere in the district such as fencing or vegetation of suitable scale for the district and setting.
- 5.12.9 Solar panels should be integrated into the initial design of new construction or infill projects, when possible, to assure cohesion of design within a historic context.
- 5.12.10 Removal of historic roofing materials during the installation of solar systems is not recommended.
- 5.12.11 Removing or otherwise altering historic roof configurations – dormers, chimneys, or other features – to add solar systems is not recommended.
- 5.12.12 Any installation procedure that will cause irreversible changes to historic features or materials is not recommended.

## 6.13 Solar Panels

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