



Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

RESOLUTION #4B-19-0407

**Supporting Installation of Roof Solar Panels at 6824 5th Street, NW,
H.P.A. No. XX-XXX**

Adopted April 22, 2019

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B takes note of the following:

- Steve Preister, the owner of 6824 5th Street, NW, (the Applicant), with plans prepared by Solenergi, seeks to install 12 solar panels on the front (East) gable of his house in the Takoma Park Historic District: 6 panels on the south side of the front attic dormer, and 6 panels on the north side of the front attic dormer. These will match the existing 11 solar panels previously installed by Solenergi on the front of the house: 4 on the dormer roof; 2 above the dormer roof; and 5 on the front porch roof. The existing and new panels are a color similar to the sixty-year gray shingles on the house's roof.
- Currently, there are 24 panels at the rear portion of the roof facing west, which were installed by Vivint Solar approximately 7 years ago, and which are visible from Aspen Street, NW, as well as the 11 panels installed by Solenergi on the front of the house (as described above), which are visible from 5th Street, NW. While the Historic Preservation Review Board approved installation of these 11 panels on the front of the house, it did not approve a previous application for installation of the 12 solar panels on the front gable. See Historic Preservation Review Board, 6824 5th Street NW, H.P.A. No. 18-618 (Sept. 27, 2018). Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B did not take a position at that time. At the time the Board did not approve the 12 solar panels on the front gable, one Historic Preservation Review Board member encouraged Mr. Preister to reapply to the Board for approval of these panels if the DC Council passed the proposed plan to move DC's power grid to entirely renewable energy sources by 2032 (as discussed below).
- In the Historic Preservation Review Board's subsequent case, 500 Dahlia Street, NW, H.P.A. No. P19-123 (Jan. 31, 2019), also in the Takoma Park Historic District and supported unanimously by Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, the Board approved an installation similar to the current proposed installation noting that it was not discordant or

incompatible with the Historic District. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B believes the current proposed installation is substantially similar in both execution and impact, and would not be discordant or incompatible with the Takoma Park Historic District, the boundaries of which lie entirely within 4B.

- The current proposed installation consists of 12 solar panels on the front gable of the residence. The visual impact of these solar panels would be minimized because of the building's elevated location from the street and sidewalk, the building's height, the gray roof, and neighborhood trees. The proposed solar panels do not perceptibly alter the massing, height, or roofline of the home, as seen from the public street view.
- Prior to the Historic Preservation Review Board's previous approval of the 11 panels on the front of the house, every resident on the 6800 block of 5th Street, NW, supported installation of solar panels on the front gable at 6824 5th Street, NW. Prior to the meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B on April 22, 2019, Mr. Preister again canvassed all neighbors on the 6800 block of 5th Street, NW, and support was again unanimous.
- One of the purposes of the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act (the Act) is "[t]o retain *and enhance* those properties which contribute to the character of the historic district and to *encourage their adaptation for current use.*" D.C. Code § 6-1101(b)(1)(A) (emphasis added). Solar panels are "increasing in popularity and effectiveness" in the residential market and would enhance the property while encouraging its adaption to current climate considerations. DC Historic Preservation Review Board, *Sustainability Guide for Existing and Historic Properties* at 34.
- The proposed solar panels are a temporary, reversible installation. They retain the original roof features and finish. They do not permanently alter the roof shape or any existing structure. See D.C. Code § 6-1101(b)(1)(B) (describing one of the purposes of the Act as "assur[ing] that alterations of existing structures are compatible with the character of the historic district."); District of Columbia, Historic Preservation guidelines, *Roofs on Historic Buildings* at 11 (describing the importance of protecting the "character of the roof" when "altering roof shapes, materials, elements and details"). Solar panel technology is constantly changing and improving, and solar panels are therefore designed as a temporary feature.
- Installation of solar panels reduces demand for conventionally generated electric power, thereby reducing environmentally damaging carbon emissions that are aggravating climate change. Installation of solar panels adheres to the spirit of legislation unanimously passed by the DC

Council to move DC's power grid to entirely renewable energy sources by 2032. If we do not preserve our planet against the catastrophic impact of climate change, we will not be able to historically preserve anything.

- The appraisal of Mr. Preister's home at 6824 5th Street, NW, noted that Mr. Preister had extended the life of the house by 100 years through his meticulous restoration of the home, including installation of steel beams in two critical locations of the house. The appraisal also noted, however, that the lack of energy efficiency in DC could not guarantee the viability of the District as a place to live in 100 years.

RESOLVED:

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B supports the Applicant's application to the Historic Preservation Review Board to install 12 solar panels on the front (East) gable of 6824 5th Street, NW, and recommends that the Historic Preservation Review Board approve the application.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Commission designates Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, in the event the designated representative Commissioner cannot carry out their representative duties for any reason, the Commission authorizes the Chair to designate another Commissioner to represent the Commission in all matter relating to this resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, consistent with DC Code § 1-309, only actions of the full Commission voting in a properly noticed public meeting have standing and carry great weight. The actions, positions, and opinions of individual commissioners, insofar as they may be contradictory to or otherwise inconsistent with the expressed position of the full Commission in a properly adopted resolution or letter, have no standing and cannot be considered as in any way associated with the Commission.

ADOPTED by show of hands vote at a regular public meeting (notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of X of nine members was present) on April 22, 2019, by a vote of X yes, X no, X abstain.

