

Installing Solar PV on Properties on the National Register of Historic Places

Solar can be installed on a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register provides opportunities for preservation incentives, such as grants, tax credits, and preservation easements. The national Historic Preservation Act of 1966 created the National Register and established a regulatory framework for federal actions involving historic properties.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory notes that, “A private owner or a state or local government acting without federal involvement has no restrictions placed upon it by Section 106 [of the National Historic Protection Act]. The regulation only applies to federal undertakings involving a property or properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register.”

(<https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy11osti/51297.pdf>, pg. 5)

Most of the preservation exists at the local level through historic preservation ordinances, which are administered by local government staff and historic preservation commissions which may be either advisory or regulatory. Generally, to install solar on a historic property or within a historic district, a property owner would have to obtain a certificate of appropriateness from the requisite body. The certificate of appropriateness would convey that the installation of solar would not diminish the historic nature and character of the property.

Additional Resources:

- National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior: [Solar Panels on Historic Properties: Installing Solar Panels and Meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards](#)
- National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation/its-bulletins/ITS52-SolarPanels.pdf> Interpreting The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation: Incorporating Solar Panels in a Rehabilitation Project

