Solar Collectors

HARC is supportive of the citizens of Key West awareness of sustainability and energy efficiency issues. The retention and adaptive use of historic buildings preserves the materials, embodied energy, and human capital already expended in their construction. The reuse of buildings is one of the greener practices in the overall promotion of sustainability.

HARC believes that energy conservation in historic buildings can be accomplished responsibly without compromising the qualities that define their historic character. In an effort to promote the reduction of carbon footprint and energy conservation HARC suggests the following recommendations to our citizens: use of energy rated appliances and mechanical equipment, reuse and use of existing cisterns, preservation and reuse of as much historic materials as possible, planting trees and installation of insulation materials on ceilings, roofs and walls.

1. HARC supports the introduction of new and emerging technology for renewable energy but will seek to achieve this by ensuring equipment is installed without permanent detriment to the historic fabric already established in the district and the least visual impact to buildings and streetscapes HARC's goal is high performance conservation with low public visibility. HARC recommends applicants exhaust all other ways of reducing the carbon footprint before putting forward applications for the installation of solar devices.
2. Any proposal to install solar energy collectors shall be based on a hierarchy of preferred locations starting with roofing not visible from public streets, then locations within rear gardens or on pergolas and only if none of these are viable because of orientation or overshadowing will HARC consider schemes which involve collectors on roofing areas or other locations visible from public streets.
3. Any proposals that include collectors and/or related equipment and cabling visible from public streets will be required to show (by way of calculation of energy outputs) that it is not possible to achieve similar performance from equipment located away from public view.
4. Installations shall not exceed power generation greater than that reasonably needed for the property. All applications must contain calculations of power outputs and on energy retained.
5. Character defining features of existing buildings (i.e. roofline, chimneys, and dormers) shall not be damaged or obscured when introducing new roof or exterior wall-mounted energy conservation systems.
6. All energy collection equipment shall be screened or hidden to the greatest possible while still achieving maximum function and effectiveness.
7. On pitched roofs, solar collector arrays shall run parallel to the original roofline and shall not rise above the peak of the roof. On flat roofs, solar collector arrays shall be set back from the parapet edge or wall/ roof conjunction and may be set at a slight pitch if not highly visible from public streets.
8. All energy collection equipment shall be considered part of the overall design of the structure. Color, shape and proportions of the solar collection array shall match the shape and proportions of the roof. Single installations on single-plane roofs are preferable to disjointed arrays or arrays on multiple roof planes. If more than one array is needed, it shall be limited to one panel section on each side of the structure if the arrays cannot be placed on a rear location. Scattered or disjointed arrays are not appropriate.
9. All energy collection equipment shall not be mounted to project from walls or other parts of the building.

Scuttles and Skylights

1. Plastic dome skylights are inappropriate in the historic district.
2. Original wood roof windows, scuttles and skylights should be retained and repaired wherever possible.