



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

7. COA-147329-2024	Final Review Meeting Date: 5/28/2024
Applicant/Petitioner	Catherine Easterling, Sadler & Whitehead
Project Description	Install flat solar panels on the main roof.
Project Location	
Address 819 East Grace Street	
Historic District: St. Paul's Episcopal Church	
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Paul's Episcopal Church is an individually designated City Old and Historic Site. • This building was built in 1844. • The Parrish house and connected complex, west of the Church are not included in the City Old and Historic Site. 	
Staff Recommendation	Partial Approval
Staff Contact	Annie Delaroderie, anne.delaroderie@rva.gov , 804-646-6335
Previous Reviews	None.
Conditions for Approval	<p>Staff recommends approval of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the solar panels be installed onto the historic roof in the gentlest way possible, as to avoid any potential damage to the roof. • Installation of solar panels on the west face of the historic roof (side facing parish house). • The solar panels be installed in a way that will allow for their installation to be reversible. <p>Staff recommends denial of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of solar panels on the east face of the roof (side facing 9th Street).

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Building Elements: Roofs- Addition of Solar Panels, page 66.	<i>11. The addition of solar panels should not require removing historic roofing material visible from the public right-of-way.</i>	The St. Paul’s Episcopal Church is a prominent building at the corner of 9 th and Grace Streets. A Corinthian colonnade supports a large pediment on the façade. The roof is not visible from the front of the building, along East Grace Street. The applicant proposes sixty-four solar panels on both the west and east portions of the historic roof. The applicant also proposes adding a large amount of solar panels on the roof of the Parish House, but that building is not included in the City Old and Historic District boundary. <u>Staff recommends that the solar panels be installed onto the historic roof in the gentlest way possible, as to avoid any potential damage to the roof.</u>
Building Elements: Roofs- Addition of Solar Panels, page 66.	<i>10. Solar panels should not alter historic roofing configurations such as dormers or chimneys.</i>	The applicant proposes having the solar panels lie flat on the historic roof, so that they will not be angled. The solar panels are planned to be located between the steeple and the rear, projecting bay.
Building Elements: Roofs- Addition of Solar Panels, page 66.	<i>11. Solar panels should be minimally visible from the public right-of-way. The installation method must be reversible and not compromise the historic integrity of the structure or the historic district.</i>	The historic roof is not visible from the façade. The roof is minimally visible along North 9 th Street. Proposed solar panels will be visible from Capital Square, east of North 9 th Street. <u>Staff recommends installing the solar panels only on the west face of the historic roof, since these solar panels will be mostly obscured by the adjacent parish building.</u> <u>Staff recommends denial of the installation of solar panels on the east face of the roof since they will be visible from the public right-of-way.</u> <u>Staff recommends that the installation method must be done in a way that is reversible.</u>

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7 (b) and (c) of the City Code, as well as with the Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines, specifically the pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.

Figures



Figure 1. View of the façade of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 819 East Grace Street.



Figure 2. View of the parish building, west of the church. This building was built around 1960.



Figure 3. West elevation of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The applicant proposes installing solar panels on west and east sides of the historic roof, south of the bell tower and north of the projecting bay on the rear.



Figure 4. View of the parish building, west of the church, near the intersection of North 7th Street and East Grace Street. This building is not included in the City Old and Historic district boundary, but the applicant is also proposing to install a large number of solar panels on the roof of this building.



Figure 5. View of the east elevation of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, along North 9th Street.



Figure 6. View of the rear, south elevation of the Church.

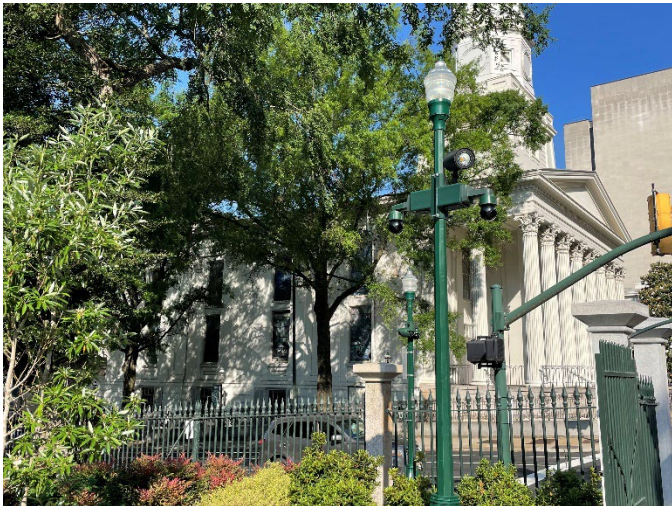


Figure 7. View of the northeast section of the church's east elevation, from Capital Square. This elevation and roof will likely be more visible in the fall.



Figure 8. View of the Church's east elevation from Capital Square. This elevation will likely be more visible in the fall.

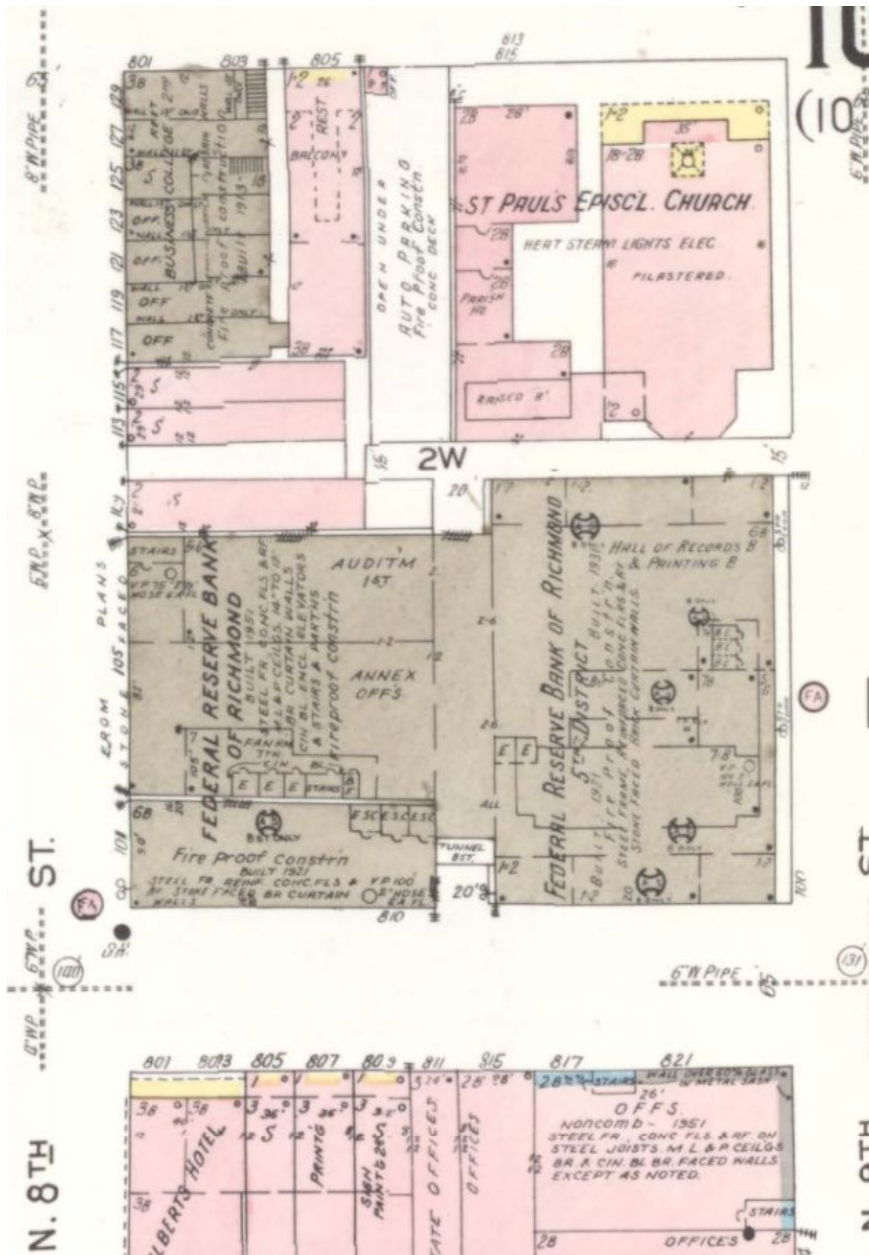


Figure 9. Sanborn Map of 819 East Grace Street, from 1952.