

**STAFF REPORT:** 02/07/2024 REGULAR MEETING  
**ADDRESS:** 2490 LONGFELLOW  
**APPLICATION NO:** HDC2024-00007  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** BOSTON-EDISON  
**APPLICANT:** JUNGHO CHO/GENERATION SOLAR  
**OWNER:** MIRANDA SMITH  
**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** 01/25/2024  
**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** 1/16/2024

**PREPARED BY:** J. ROSS

**SCOPE:** INSTALL SOLAR PANELS ON ROOF

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The house at 2490 Longfellow is a two-story, Colonial-Revival style dwelling that was erected ca. 1915. The building features a rectangular plan and is topped with a side-gabled roof with deep, overhanging wood eaves. Asphalt shingles cover the roof. Two front-gabled dormers are located at the roof's front-facing slope while two shed-roof dormers are at the rear-facing slope. A two-story, hipped-roof wing is located at the rear elevation. A brick chimney is at the west elevation. Exterior walls are primarily clad with red brick while lapped siding is found at the front and side elevation's first-story projecting bays, the rear hipped-roof wing, and the rooftop dormers. Windows are double-hung vinyl units. The building's front elevation displays a Classically inspired, wood door surround and original decorative wood shutters. A detached, side-gabled garage sits to the rear of the house.



**2490 Longfellow, staff photo taken on 1/25/2024**

### **PROPOSAL**

With the current proposal, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to install new solar panels/equipment at the building. Specifically, the proposed installation includes the following:

- A new 16-panel array at the roof's front/Longfellow-facing roof surface. Each panel will be mounted upon a 6"-high rack. Per the submitted roof plan, the solar arrays will extend to the front and east edge of the roof.
- A new 4-panel array at the roof's rear-facing roof surface, between the two shed-roof dormers. Each panel will be mounted upon a 6"-high rack.
- New electrical service equipment at east and rear walls

**STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- The building's original wood windows were replaced with vinyl units sometime between 1980 and 2007, as depicted in the below images. Staff did review HDC and building department records and did not identify any record that the current vinyl windows were approved by the HDC and/or received a permit.



Arched window openings and eave returns at dormers and mullions at first story bay are no longer extant. Also, wood windows and associated trim are no longer extant

2490 Longfellow, 1980, HDAB designation slide



2490 Longfellow, 2007 Google Streetview image. Note that arched windows and eave returns at dormers, mullions at front elevation bay, and wood windows are no longer extant



2490 Longfellow, note that the current windows are vinyl and aluminum coilstock is located at the window trim. 1/25/2024 staff photo

- The solar array proposed for installation at the roof's rear slope/surface will not be visible from the public right-of-way.

**ISSUES**

- *The Secretary of The Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* [Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/illustrated-guidelines-on-sustainability-for-rehabilitating-historic-buildings) recommends the following in regards to the installation of solar/photovoltaic equipment at historic buildings:
  - Installing a solar device in a compatible location on the site or on a non-historic building or addition where it will have minimal impact on the historic building and its site.
  - Installing a low-profile solar device on the historic building so that it is not visible or only minimally visible from the public right of way: for example, on a flat roof and set back to take advantage of a parapet or other roof feature to screen solar panels from view; or on a secondary slope of a roof, out of view from the public right of way
- As the house has a side-gabled roof, the solar array proposed for installation at the roof's front/Longfellow-facing surface will be highly visible from the public right-of-way which conflicts with the above-referenced Secretary of The Interior's guidance. However, as noted above, the solar array proposed for installation at the roof's rear slope/surface will not be visible from the public right of way. If additional solar panels need to be located at

the property, staff recommends that they be installed at a location in the rear yard so that they will be not visible, or minimally visible, from the public right of way. Such an installation might be freestanding/detached solar collectors or panels located on the garage's roof

**RECOMMENDATION**

**#1). Section 21-2-78. Determination of the Historic District Commission – DENIAL**

It is staff's opinion that the solar equipment proposed for installation at the house's front/Longfellow-facing slope does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation for the following reasons:

- As the house has a side-gabled roof, the solar array proposed for installation at the roof's front/Longfellow-facing surface will be highly visible from the public right-of-way which conflicts with the *Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a denial of this work item because it does not conform to the district's elements of design, nor does it meet the following Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

2.) *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided*

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9.) *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*

**#2). Section 21-2-78. Determination of the Historic District Commission – COA**

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a COA for the solar array that is proposed for installation at the rear facing roof slope/surface and the location of new electric service at the side and rear elevations, because the work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the district's elements of design.