

Solar energy installations on heritage buildings

Guidance regarding the installation of solar energy technologies, such as solar photovoltaic systems and solar hot water systems, on heritage listed buildings.

Introduction

Mount Alexander Shire Council actively supports both renewable energy and heritage conservation.

The Shire has beautiful and significant heritage places and has one of the highest percentages of households with a solar energy system in Victoria.

Residents, businesses and Council have all embraced solar technologies for both environmental and financial reasons, and the number of solar system installations each year is growing.

While buildings and settings have always changed over time to include new technologies - from light bulbs to lavatories - new technologies that are visible to the public may adversely impact the heritage values of a building or place.

In some circumstances heritage expertise is necessary to provide advice and/or decisions regarding the appropriateness of a proposed solar system installation.



Council permits

A Council planning permit will be required if the site is located within a Heritage Overlay and the proposed panels will be visible from a street (other than a laneway) or public park.

Heritage listed

Places of heritage significance are listed in the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme or on the Victorian Heritage Register.

Proponents of solar system installations must determine if the property is subject to a Heritage Overlay.

If the property is listed in a Heritage Overlay, or if you are unsure if it is, contact Council's Planning Unit by calling **(03) 5471 1700** or via email info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

If the property is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, the proponent will need to call Heritage Victoria on **136 186** or email heritage.victoria@delwp.vic.gov.au

Permit fees

Should a planning permit be required from Council for the installation of a solar system, the following information is required to assess an application:

- [Application form](#)
- [Application checklist](#)
- Fee of \$102 if the works are less than \$10,000 to complete or \$239 if the works are \$10,000 to \$100,000.

Forms are available under planning and permits on Council's website.

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Council Permit Assessment

Installation of a solar system within a Heritage Overlay is subject to the 'VicSmart' planning process. This means Council will determine the application within ten business days provided a complete application is submitted.

In deciding whether to issue a planning permit Council is required to consider the impact of the installation on the heritage values of the building and its setting. Council's Heritage Advisor may advise planning staff of any adverse impacts and will often consult proponents to try to develop a mutually agreeable outcome.

Considerations include:

- The impact on the heritage values of the place including whether fixing or removing solar technologies will damage the historic fabric, the character, or its setting.
- Minimising impact by locating solar systems on concealed roof planes such as internal valleys or behind raised parapets, on new extensions or outbuildings, within existing roof ridge lines and flush with the roof.

Please note that satisfying these considerations does not guarantee approval of any planning permit application.

Process overview

Heritage protections and solar energy technologies can and do happily co-exist. However each proposal presents a unique set of circumstances. The following flow-chart provides basic guidance on the permit application process.

