Solar Panels

There are many factors that go into the placement of solar panels, which could have a variety of impacts, from aesthetic to historical integrity. The following are a few guidelines to assist in better placement of solar systems.

- Solar technologies should integrate well with historic structures including size, panel arrangement and design, frame color, glare, and mounting.
- The system should be located in the least visible high-performance location and not visible from the public right-of-way.
- Installations should not damage or alter the exterior of the historic structures.

Quick Facts

- 20% of energy costs come from heat lost in the attic, basement and crawl space.
- Brick, plaster, concrete and timber used in most historic buildings are in fact the least energy consumptive of materials, while plastic, steel, vinyl and aluminum, predominantly used in new buildings, are the most energy consumptive of materials.
- It takes 35-50 years for an energy efficient new building to save the amount of energy lost in demolishing an existing building.
- In 1999, the General Services Administration examined its building inventory and found that utility costs for historic buildings were 27% less than for more modern buildings.
- Leafy trees on the south and west of a building provide shade from the summer sun.
- Older windows can perform as well as vinyl replacements.
- For exteriors, light colors reflect heat better than darker colors.

Images Courtesy of City of San Clemente and San Clemente Historical Society

For information about the City of San Clemente's historic preservation program, visit the Historic Preservation Website at: http://san-clemente.org/sc/standard.aspx?pageid=438
Or contact the Planning Department at 949-361-6100
Historic buildings are irreplaceable reminders of the City of San Clemente’s past and valuable educational, aesthetic, cultural and social assets. By preserving their physical attributes, you are contributing to the local quality of life. To further maintain our high quality urban environment, sustainable development is needed.

Sustainable Development encompasses three components:
- Environmental Responsibility
- Economic Responsibility, and
- Social/Cultural Responsibility

Historic preservation incorporates all three components of sustainable development; as such preserving the City’s historic resources has been a community objective since the 1970s. There are diverse examples of sustainable development within historic preservation. To preserve, rehabilitate and reuse a historic building you are preserving land, reducing waste energy and recycling (environmental). You are also creating specialized jobs, stimulating the local economy, and attracting foreign capital via heritage tourism (economic and cultural).

Making Your Historic Building Energy Efficient

Energy efficiency upgrades breathe new life into aged buildings and offer economic benefits due to lower costs. Thus, historic buildings are often adjusted to integrate contemporary conveniences, including improved central heating, air conditioning, hot water, wiring for electronics and expanded living spaces. To appropriately adapt historic buildings, modern uses must consider energy conscious ways, so that retaining the buildings provides an opportunity to preserve both history and the planet for future generations.


The technologies for enhancing the energy efficiency of historic buildings help extend the useful lives of these structures and benefits both present and future users. To find out what efficiency measures make sense for your building, it is recommended you have an instrumented energy audit done by a professional energy auditor. An energy audit may be done by your local utility company. After the audit you may undertake a combination of do-it-yourself efforts and work contracted by appropriate building professionals.

**Recommendations to make your house more energy efficient with little impact to the historic resource:**

- Replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs)
- Adjusting or replacing hot water heaters, refrigerators, freezers, fans, furnaces, boilers, and air conditioners.
- Install a programmable thermostat to keep your house comfortable.
- Curing water leaks and replacing high flow shower heads.
- Insulating hot water pipes and hot water heater tanks.
- Repairing windows, adding an interior pane, interior blinds, shades and curtains can greatly improves the energy efficiency of historic windows.
- Sealing and insulating your historic home.
- Replacing old furnaces with modern units.

![Pie chart showing energy usage](Image)

**How Does the Air Escape?**

*Graphic courtesy of U.S. Department of Energy*

(Continued on Outside Panel)