

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chapel Hill Historic District Commission

FROM: Britany Waddell, Planning Director
Anya Grahn-Federmack, Principal Planner
Charnika Harrell, Planner II

SUBJECT: 504 N. Boundary Street: Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)
(PIN 9788-59-8968, HDC-23-28)

FILING DATE: November 7, 2023

DATE: December 12, 2023

COA SUMMARY

The applicant, Emerald Energy, on behalf of owner David Hemsey, requests a COA for:

- Installing 30 solar panels on the roof slopes of the south, west, and east elevations and the associated electrical equipment on the south (rear) elevation of the house.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The proposed location is zoned Residential-1 (R-1) and is in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District.

BACKGROUND

November 7, 2023	The applicant submits a COA application for the work described above.
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DISCUSSION

The Commission should discuss whether the work proposed by the Applicant is or is not incongruous with the special character of the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. The Applicant has submitted photos of structure located at 504 N. Boundary Street which the Applicant asserts shows the visibility of the Subject Property from the street.

NOTE

The [*Chapel Hill Historic Districts Design Principles and Standards*](#)¹ are incorporated into the record by reference.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 – Written Decision (approving the COA)
2. [Special Character Essay – Franklin-Rosemary Historic District \(pages 25-30\)](#)²
3. Application Materials

¹https://townhall.townofchapelhill.org/large_docs/historic_district/CH%20HD%20Design%20Principles%20and%20Standards.pdf

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WRITTEN DECISION - APPROVING CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

WRITTEN DECISION APPROVING AN APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 504 N. BOUNDARY STREET (PIN 9788-59-8968, PROJECT #HDC-23-28)

WHEREAS, having reviewed the applicant's argument and various documents and other evidence submitted at the hearing on this matter, and having heard public comment on the application, the Historic District Commission (HDC) finds as facts those facts summarized by the Chair at the conclusion of the Commission's hearing of this matter and hereby incorporates them by reference as Commission Findings of Fact; and finds that such facts are supported by competent, material, and substantial evidence presented to the Commission; and

BE IT RESOLVED by the Historic District Commission of the Town of Chapel Hill that, having considered the requested Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) at 504 N. Boundary Street, requested by Emerald Energy, on behalf of owner David Hemsey for:

- Installing 30 solar panels on the roof slopes of the south, west, and east elevations and the associated electrical equipment on the south (rear) elevation of the house.

In accord with the improvements on the attached site plan, and identified as Orange County Property Identifier Number 9788-59-8968, the Board makes the following finding:

1. The requested Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is not incongruous with the special character of the Gimghoul Historic District.

The following Design Standards apply to the Application:

3.1 Roofs, Gutters, & Chimneys (pages 81-82)

3.1.7. When possible, locate new roof features and mechanical equipment—including, but not limited to dormers, chimneys, skylights, vents, plumbing stacks, solar collectors, and satellite dishes—on roof slopes where they are not visible from the street or in locations where they will not compromise this historic roof design, damage character-defining features or materials, or otherwise compromise the architectural integrity of the building.

3.9 Sustainability & Energy Efficiency (pages 107-108)

3.9.7. Locate new mechanical equipment, utilities, and sustainable site features—including air-conditioning and heating units, meters, exposed pipes, rain barrels or cisterns, and raised planting beds—in locations that are minimally visible from the street and do not alter or remove historic fabric from the building or do not diminish or compromise the overall character of the building, site, or district. Screen ground-level equipment from view with vegetation or fencing.

3.9.8. Locate low-profile solar panels on side or rear elevations, when possible, or on low-sloped roofs where they are minimally visible from the street.

- a. Solar panels should be flush-mounted—installed parallel with and close to the surface of the roof to which they are attached—in order to minimize their visual impact.

- b. Solar panels should match the color of the existing roof material as much as possible, in order to visually blend with the roof.
- c. Solar panels should be set back from the edges of the roof to minimize their visibility.
- d. Solar panels should not extend above the roof ridges or otherwise alter the roof form of the building.
- e. No associated pipes or cables should be visible from the street.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission hereby grants the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, in accord with the plan listed above and the following conditions:

1. The certificate of appropriateness shall be valid for three hundred sixty-five (365) calendar days from date of issuance. If the authorized work has not commenced within that period, has not been extended by the commission, or has been discontinued for more than three hundred sixty-five (365) calendar days from the date of issuance, such certificate of appropriateness shall expire, and the applicant shall be required to reapply and obtain a new certificate of appropriateness before commencing further work.

Signed - Historic District Commission Chair, Brian Daniels

This, the 12th day of December 2023.