

A Home Owner in Historic St. Charles and Day & Night Solar Both Pass a History Test

The city of St. Charles has a rich history dating back to 1682 beginning with explorer LaSalle, Daniel Boone and Lewis and Clark. In 1970 the St. Charles Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. With this listing comes a responsibility to maintain the exterior integrity of the district's buildings.

Maintaining exterior display guidelines became a challenge for St. Charles home owners Bret and Kimberly Klein when they decided that they wanted to become more environmentally conscious and install solar panels on their home. While reducing their carbon footprint and saving on energy costs were two great benefits, solar roof panels didn't exactly meet the 19th Century Test (1800-1899). The goal of the 19th Century Test is to enhance the district by avoiding the display of anything contemporary.

The Klein's home had belonged to Bret's grandfather and was *not* a contributing historic home, even though it was located in the Historic District. Bret met Andrea Darbon, a representative from Day & Night Solar at a home show. He evaluated several other solar companies and made the decision to work with Day & Night Solar.

Even though his home was not a historical structure, Bret was concerned about getting the needed permissions. He would need to present a proposal to the historical committee to seek approval. Andrea assured the Klein's that Day & Night Solar would help present the proposal.

Bret and Andrea met with the committee and the proposal was turned down. There were not enough votes in favor of letting the project go through.

A city representative witnessed the vote and told Bret and Andrea that they could appeal it. They would need to file the appeal and represent a proposal to the City of St. Charles.

Together Bret and Day & Night Solar built their case. They outlined how having a solar system would increase the resale value of the home. The panels would not be visible from the street or clash with other homes. Bret also took pictures of contemporary structures such as satellite dishes, roof antennas and solar speed monitors all examples of modern technology displayed on homes and streets throughout the historic district. The solar panels to be installed on his home would be far less visible than these other contemporary structures.

Fortunately, a similar situation presented itself in the historic district of Soulard in St. Louis, Missouri. The city's Preservation Board first rejected a proposal for a 32-panel solar array on top of the Soulard Bastille Bar on Russell Boulevard. Betsy Bradley, director of the city's Cultural Resources Office, suggested that the owner appeal the denial, which he did. The Preservation Board did a complete u-turn and unanimously voted in favor of the bar owner.

What changed their minds? The city ordinance granted the city a variance or a waiver. The project was not interfering with the district's historical nature, the applicant had no other "economically feasible"

way to do the work, and it was unlikely that the solar panels would affect the property values of the whole district.

Armed with all of these facts, Bret and Day & Night Solar approached the City of St. Charles and were given a unanimous vote to move forward on the project.

Installation of the 9kW solar system was completed on their home. The system is up and running creating clean energy, lowering the green house gases and carbon footprint for the City of St Charles.

Day & Night Solar and the Kleins passed their first history test. Bret Klein says, “Now my “non-contributing” house is truly a historical home in the community... being the first home with solar energy in the St Charles, Missouri historical district.”

Day & Night Solar continues to make history with each new installation that requires more creativity and ingenuity to meet the demand for solar power. To find out if solar energy is right for you, visit: <http://DayAndNightSolar.com> or email at: info@dayandnightsolar.com.