



Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board



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<https://mn.gov/caapb/>

Date: Updated January 17th, 2023
To: Members of the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB)
From: Peter Musty, Principal Planner and Administrator of the Zoning and Design Rules, CAAPB

RE: Rooftop Solar at St. Paul City School

The School implemented rooftop solar, requiring Conditional Use Permit (CUP) from CAAPB.

“Solar energy systems or devices” are permitted as Conditional Uses of the Rules Governing Zoning and Design in the Minnesota State Capitol Area (the “Rules”) within chapter 2400.2205, page 20. The criteria for the granting of a Conditional Use Permit in the Capitol Area are found in the Rules (2400.3155, Subpart 1):

“...A conditional use is permitted upon a finding by the board that the use is specifically enumerated as a conditional use for the district and that, if established, the use: A. will not materially adversely affect the general character of existing principal uses; B. will not adversely affect the beauty, dignity, and architectural integrity of the Capitol area; and C. will be established under the conditions and requirements for the uses enumerated in this chapter and additional conditions and requirements as the board may impose to ensure compliance with items A and B.”

Staff and Advisors recommend approval.

Staff and advisors concur that the rooftop solar atop the School satisfies criteria for (A) and (B) above, and they do not find any need for any “additional conditions or requirements” as enabled by (C).

Findings:

A review of the installation of solar on the rooftop by CAAPB staff yielded the following findings; that the installation of the school has no discernible adverse impacts to the character of the existing building, nor does the installation (which is invisible from the street or neighboring properties) represent any discernible adversely affects on the beauty, dignity or architectural integrity of the Capitol Area. Further, the installation of solar on the rooftop has precedent in the Capitol Area on campus buildings, is in full compliance with Rules on issues such as height limit or visibility of rooftop mechanical equipment; and is a best practice supported by comprehensive plan policy, beginning with [Comprehensive Plan’s Chapter 3](#) (Capitol Area Principle 3):

“The Capitol Area is a model for Minnesota, where best practices are expected in the planning, design and development of public and private projects.”

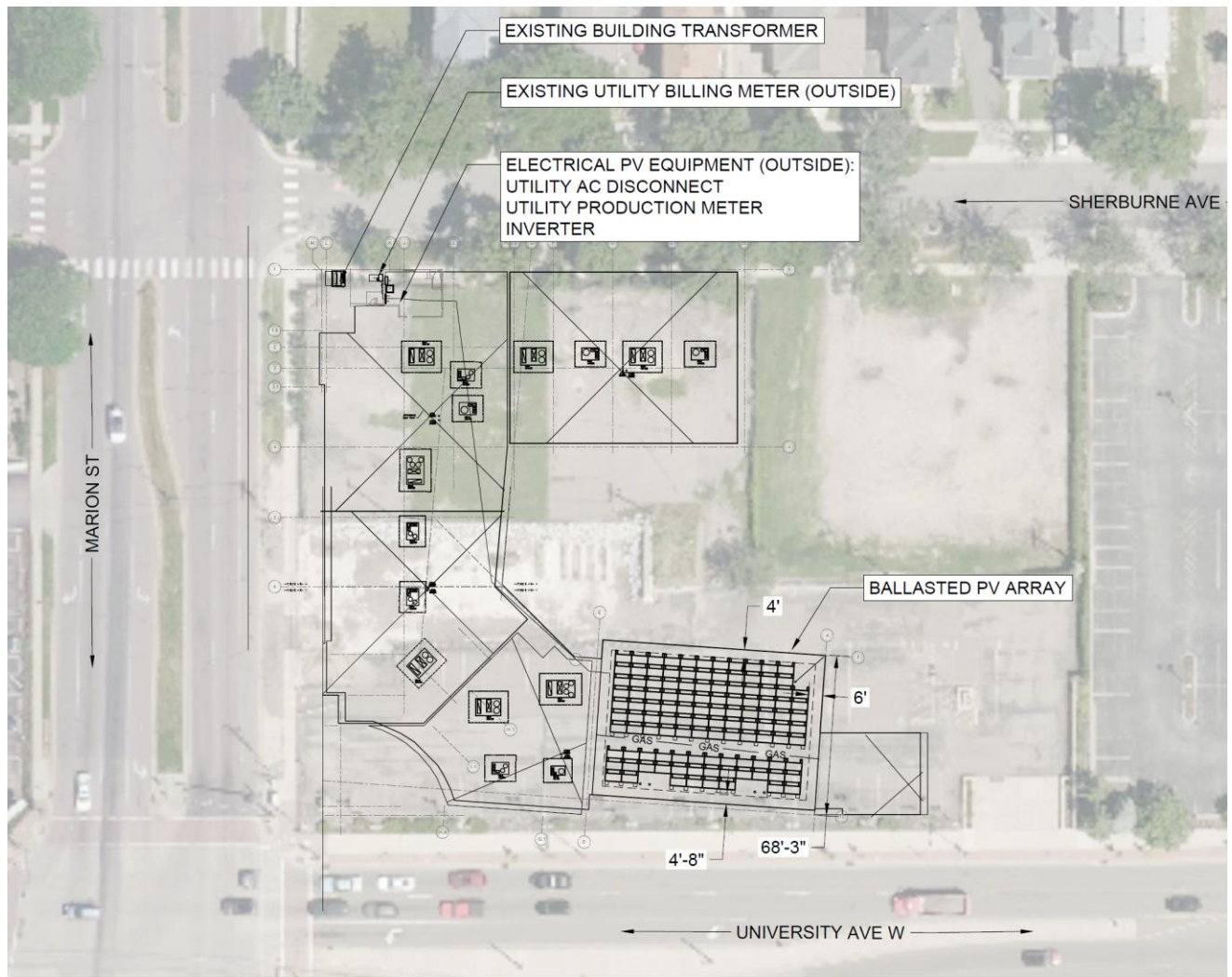
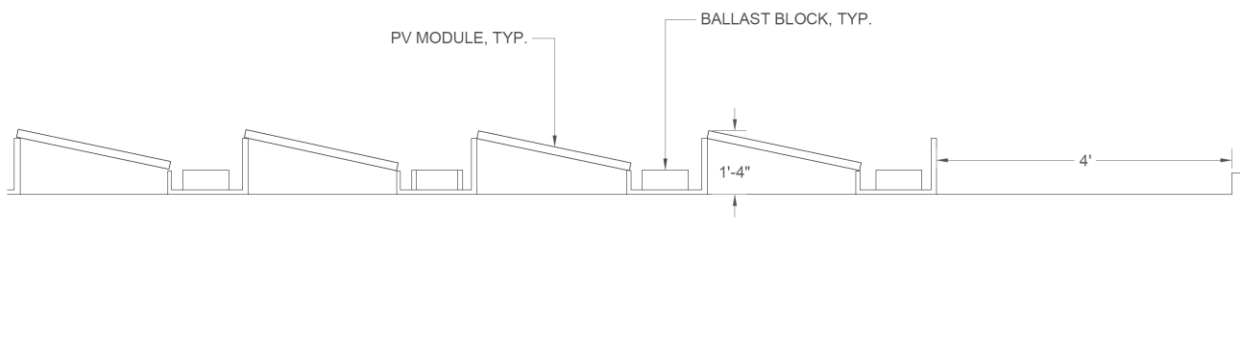


Figure 1 (above) - The ballasted photovoltaic (solar) arrays placed atop the new gymnasium along University Avenue. Figure 2 (below) – A cross-sectional views showing the low (1' 4") profile of the arrays, placed back from the rooftop parapet.



Suggested Language of Board Action

“The Capitol Area Architectural & Planning Board (CAAPB) approves a Conditional Use Permit for solar installation on the rooftop of St Paul City School, as represented in the memo for this board meeting.”