



## HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION OF PITTSBURGH

### DESIGN GUIDELINES:

### CELLULAR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT ON HISTORIC BUILDINGS

#### **Background and Policy**

1. The Pittsburgh Historic Review Commission reviews and regulates all exterior alterations to City-designated Historic Landmarks and to structures within City-designated Historic Districts. The Commission conducts an established public process through which it may approve, deny, or suggest modifications to all proposals for exterior alterations which are visible from the public street or way.
2. The goal of the Commission's regulation is to preserve and protect the distinctive architectural and visual character of the structures, sites, and neighborhoods, which are important to Pittsburgh's heritage.
3. The Historic Review Commission encourages cellular service providers to select antenna sites outside of designated Historic Districts whenever possible, or if location in a Historic District is the only alternative, to select a non-contributing structure within the District for equipment installation.
4. All proposals for installations of cellular communications equipment on City Historic Landmarks or within the boundaries of City Historic Districts must be reviewed and approved by the Pittsburgh Historic Review Commission before they can take place. It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that a proposed installation will have the least possible visual impact on designated historic fabric and on the surrounding historic district.
5. In general, the Historic Review Commission will not approve the installation of cellular communications equipment that will be visible from the public street or way.

#### **Guidelines**

1. *Size and Location:*
    - a. Cellular communications equipment should be set as far back from the building parapet as possible, especially on the primary facades, and should rise a minimum height above the parapet edge.
    - b. Panel antennae flush-mounted to the side walls of buildings will be considered only if they can be made to blend in completely with the building's architecture, or if they can be installed on minimally-visible secondary facades.
  2. *Concealment:* The Commission will consider proposals to conceal cellular equipment in a replica of a typical rooftop structure, such as a mechanical penthouse, chimney, or flagpole, under the following conditions:
    - a. Concealment structures should be identical to authentic structures in design, dimensions, and location on the building;
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- b. Concealment structures must be clad in a material whose color and texture are not distinguishable from the real material of which they would typically be made (in most cases, brick to match the building);
  - c. A structure which would never have existed on a building should not be introduced to conceal cellular equipment (e.g. an elevator penthouse on a single family home);
  - d. The building's fundamental architecture should not be altered by concealing material (e.g. building up an existing parapet or adding architectural features where none originally existed);
  - e. The Commission discourages adding on to existing rooftop penthouses to conceal cellular equipment because it is very difficult to create an invisible seam between the original structure and the concealing box, and because such additions may alter the proportional relationship of the penthouse to the overall structure.
2. *Conduits:*
    - a. Whenever possible, wires and cables should be run through existing chases on the interior of the building, as permitted by the local building code.
    - b. Wires and cables may not be run on primary facades.

### **Other Requirements**

Most City Historic Landmarks and Districts are also listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places. By Federal law, projects affecting National Register listed or eligible properties which use Federal money or licenses (including a license from the FCC) must undergo a review by the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation (PA BHP) in addition to any review required by the Pittsburgh Historic Review Commission. To find out if a particular building is on or eligible for the National Register, or for more information about this process, contact the PA BHP directly at (717) 772-4363.

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