

Docket Item # 5  
BAR CASE # 2010-0220

BAR Meeting  
September 1, 2010

**ISSUE:** Alterations

**APPLICANT:** City of Alexandria (New Cingular Wireless, Agent)

**LOCATION:** 105 North Union Street

**ZONE:** CD / Commercial

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

That when this cellular technology becomes obsolete and is no longer utilized, all equipment will be removed.

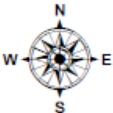
**\*\*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of final approval if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

**\*\*BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-746-4200 for further information.



**BAR CASE #2010-0220**

**09/01/2010**



**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of cellular antennas, canister covers and related equipment cabinet and cabling on the roof of the Torpedo Factory Arts Center, at 105 North Union Street. The proposed antennas/canister covers will be the only items mounted on the rooftop visible from a public right-of-way and these require the review and approval by the Board. The current location of the equipment cabinet on the west side of the rooftop preserves the water facing portion of the roof for a future use. Staff does not believe that the equipment cabinets will be visible from any public right-of-way however; we will work closely with the applicant during installation to ensure that any visibility is minimized.

The subject antennas will be housed in three, 5' diameter, 9' high, chimney-like canisters fabricated from PVC Stealthcore – a paintable, PVC composite product. The three separate canisters will be located on the building's flat roof near the Union Street façade. The first will be located in the building's northwestern corner, and offset 10' from the front and side elevations. The second will be centered on the building's Union Street elevation and offset 10' from the front façade. The final unit will be located in the southwestern corner of the building and offset 10' from the front and side elevations. These units will be powered through non-penetrating, PVC sleepers which will lead to an equipment cabinet near an existing skylight.

**II. HISTORY:**

Originally built in 1918 in the Art Deco style by the U.S. Navy as torpedo factory and renovated in 1983 into the City of Alexandria's Arts Center.

*Previous Approvals:*

The Board has approved a number of projects at the Arts Center which include the following:

BAR Case #1998-0011, 2/18/98 - Signage for North Elevation  
BAR Case #1995-0022, 3/1/95 - Rear Signage  
BAR Case #2002-0089, 5/15/02 – Signage  
BAR Case#2007-0280, 2/6/08 – Signage, Lighting and Awnings

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposal complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

The subject proposal is to install three new, paintable PVC composite canisters on the Torpedo Factory's flat roof. The new canisters are being designed to complement the existing historic smoke stack. Each canister houses three, cellular antennas and is fabricated from Stealthcore, a composite material that maximizes cellular frequency output. The composite material will be textured in a semi-rough stucco finish and painted to match the color of the existing historic

smoke stack. The three canisters will be mounted to the roof in the locations identified below:

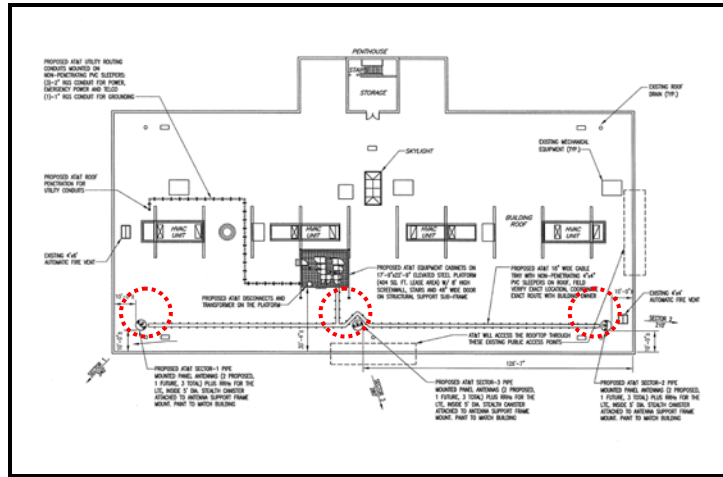


Figure 1: Illustration of Applicant's Current Submission

The *Design Guidelines* clearly state that “Respectful additions make use of the design vocabulary of the existing historic structure;” and “An addition to a historic building should be clearly distinguishable from the original structure;” and finally, “In general, the existing form of a historic building should be retained in the expression of the addition.”

This submission is a revised design in response to Staff's concerns with previous proposals, which included the installation of multiple antennas on the historic smoke stack, and the installation of each of the proposed nine (9) antennae housed in separate PVC cylinders (see below).

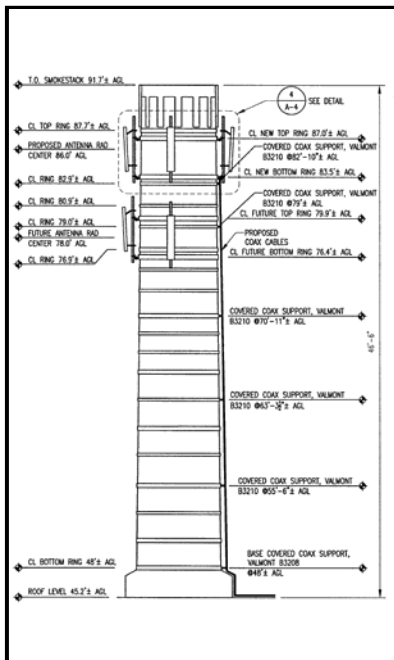


Figure 2: Illustrations of two of the Applicant's Previous Design Submissions for antennae bolted on the smokestack and for multiple individual roof mounted antennas

The applicant has been very responsive and willing to work with Staff to find a solution, which would not require altering existing historic fabric and would minimize the visual impact to the streetscape. The current submittal is the result of the applicant's hard work and study.

As the attached photo mock-ups indicate, the proposed cylinders will be visible on Union Street from lower Cameron to lower King. Foliage and structures block the visibility of the cylinders beyond these boundaries (see pages 7-9). The cylinders will not be visible from the waterfront's boardwalk or its docks. Staff has been working very hard with the applicants to find a solution to this design which does not destroy or negatively impact the historic materials on this building and also has a minimal impact to the existing streetscape. Staff feels that the current proposal, as submitted, achieves these goals. The design of the three small new cylinders visually references without competing with the cylindrical historic smoke stack tower. A sample of the proposed stucco finish can be seen on page 12. The paint color will be matched to the color on the historic smoke stack. The design intent is to preserve the historic smoke stack as the prominent iconic architectural feature on the rooftop, thus protecting its historic integrity. While the top portion of the new antenna covers is clearly visible from a few locations just off of Union Street, Staff believes that their color and form will cause them to blend into the other architectural features of this building and they will be virtually unnoticeable to the majority of the public.

The antennas and the cylinders are being mounted on the top of the roof utilizing a ballasted base fixture. No penetrations into the roof will be required. The mounting frames are not permanent and will not have a detrimental impact on the existing roof surface. Additionally, when the cellular technology becomes obsolete and is no longer utilized, the equipment can be easily removed.

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of cellular antennas and canister covers on the roof of the Torpedo Factory Arts Center, as submitted.

**STAFF:**

Michele Oaks, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

**IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

**Code Administration:**

No Comments Received.

**Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES):**

No Comments Received.

**V. IMAGES**



Figure 1: Photo Simulation – Cameron and Union, Looking East

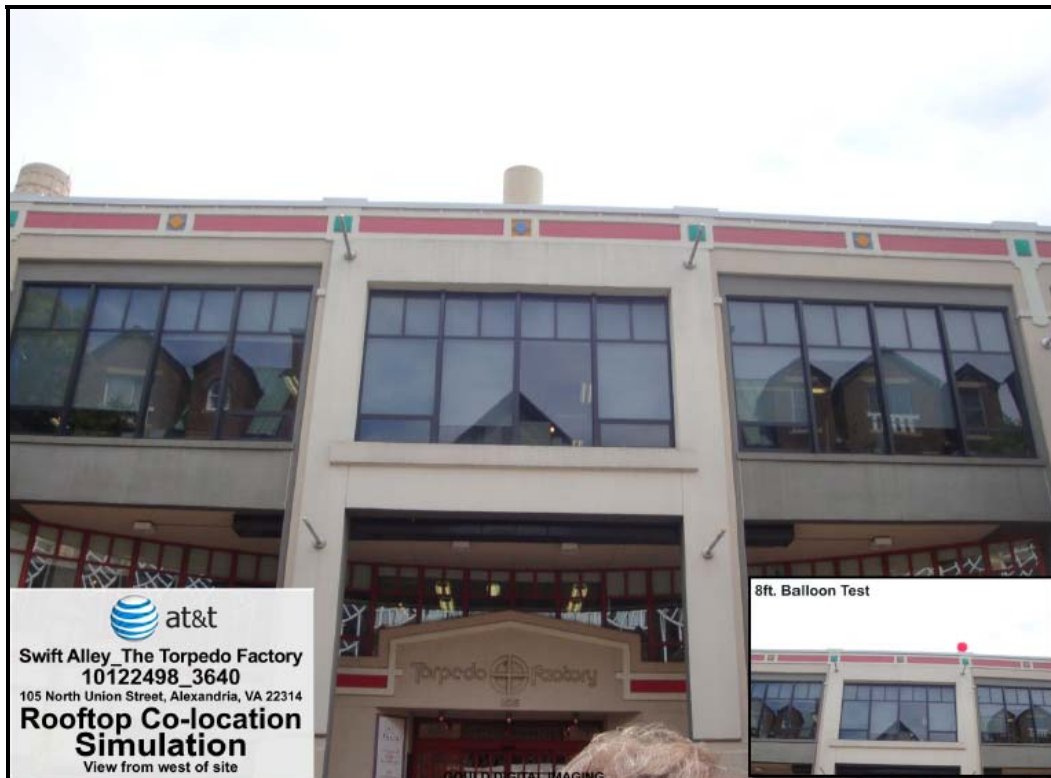


Figure 2: Photo Simulation –105 North Union Entrance, Looking East



Figure 3: Photo Simulation – Fayette Alley and Union, Looking East



Figure 4: Photo Simulation – King and Union, Looking Northeast

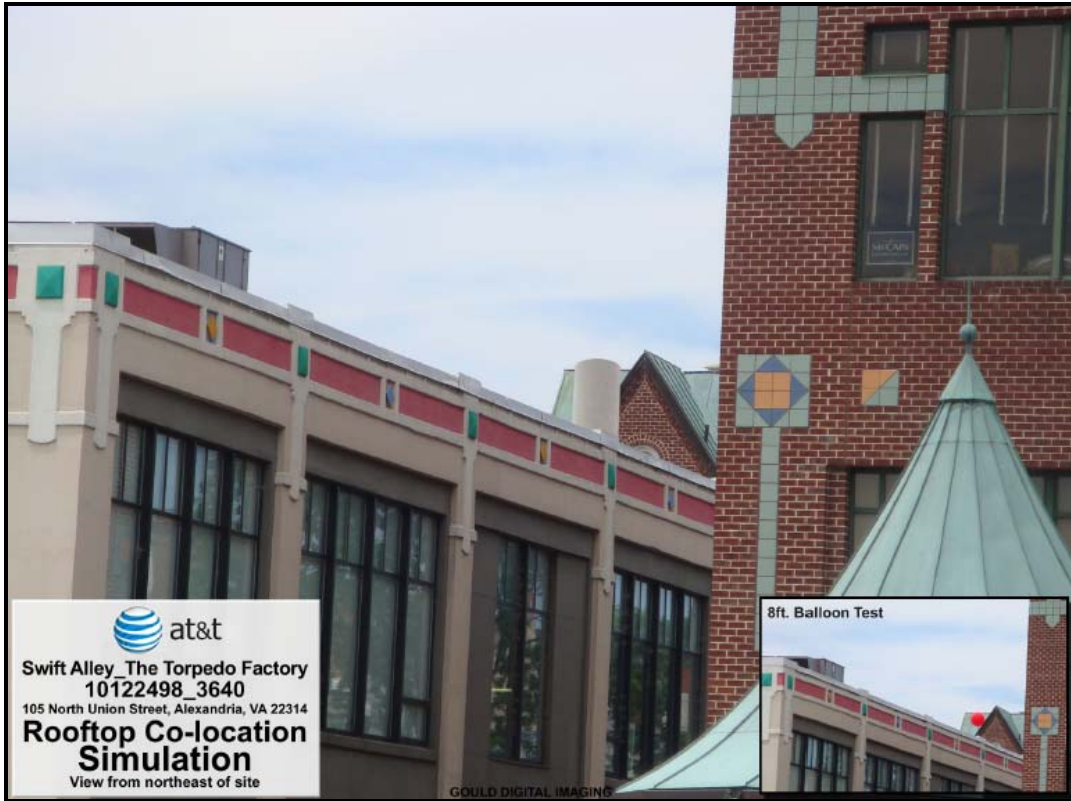


Figure 5: Figure 2: Photo Simulation – Entrance to Chart House

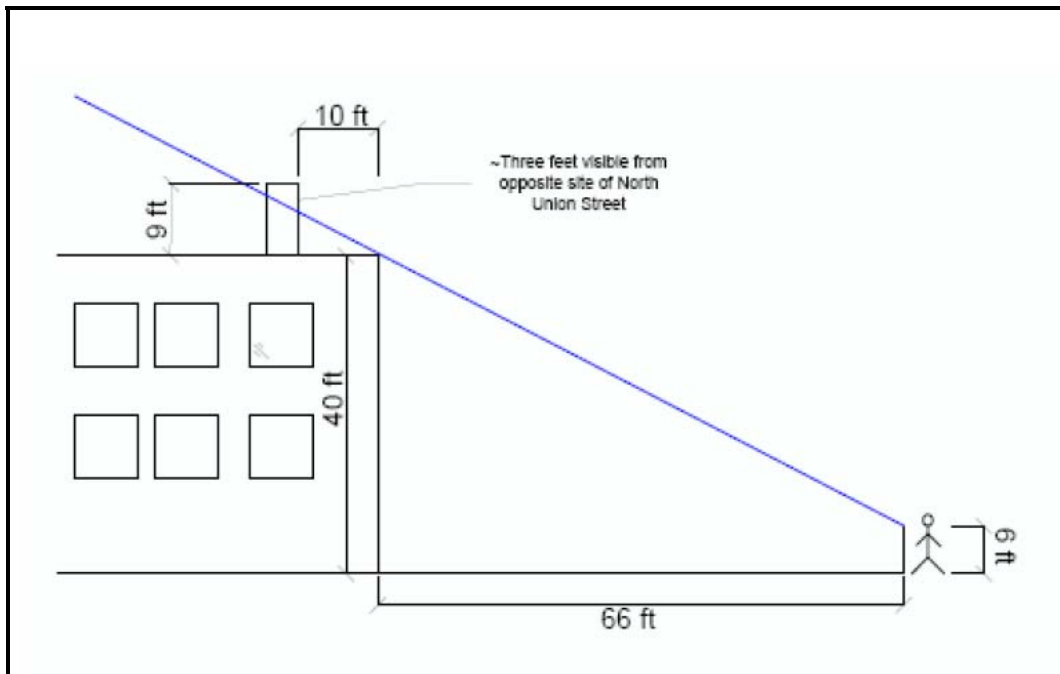


Figure 6: Sight line Study



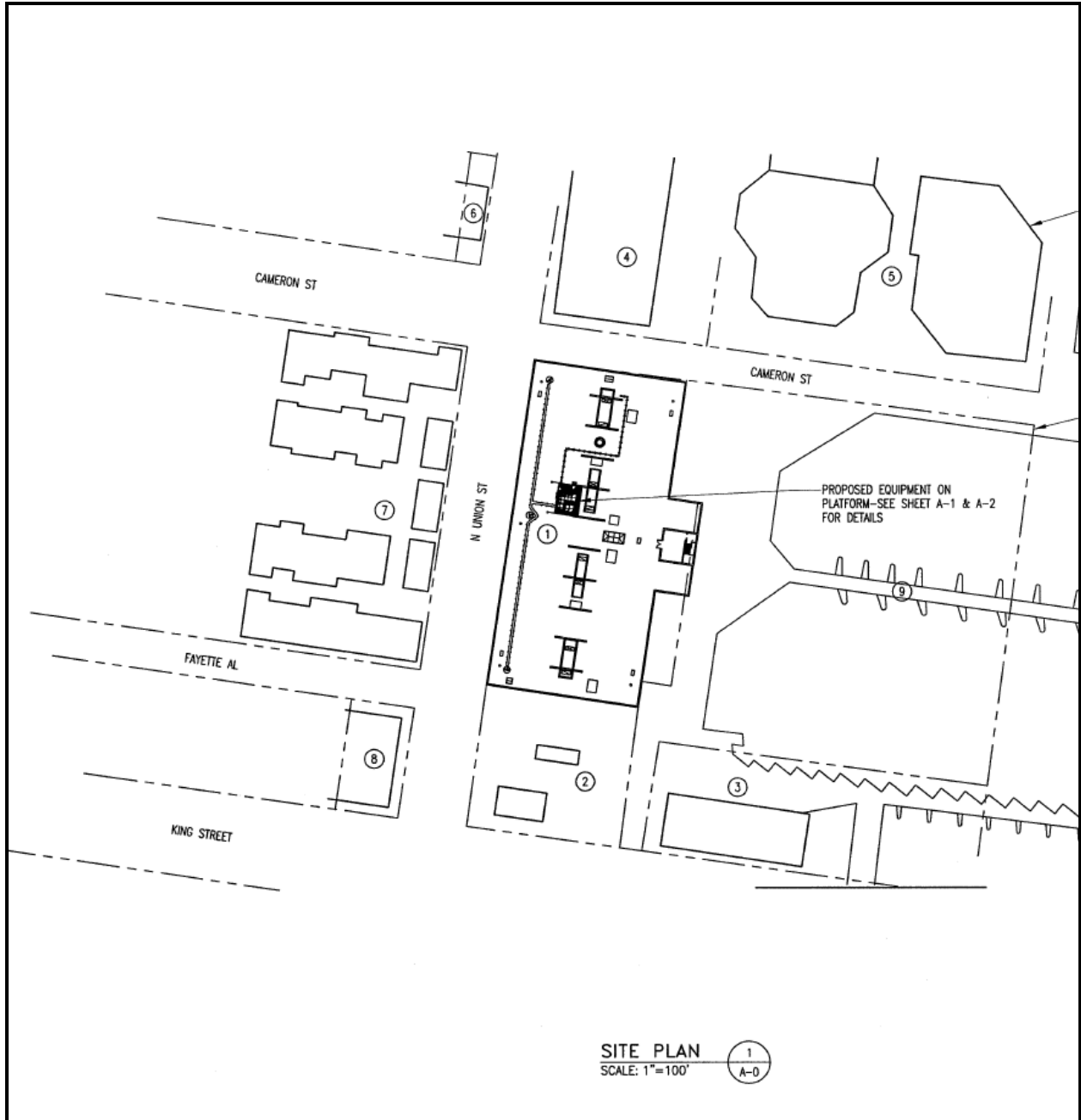


Figure 7: Sight line Study

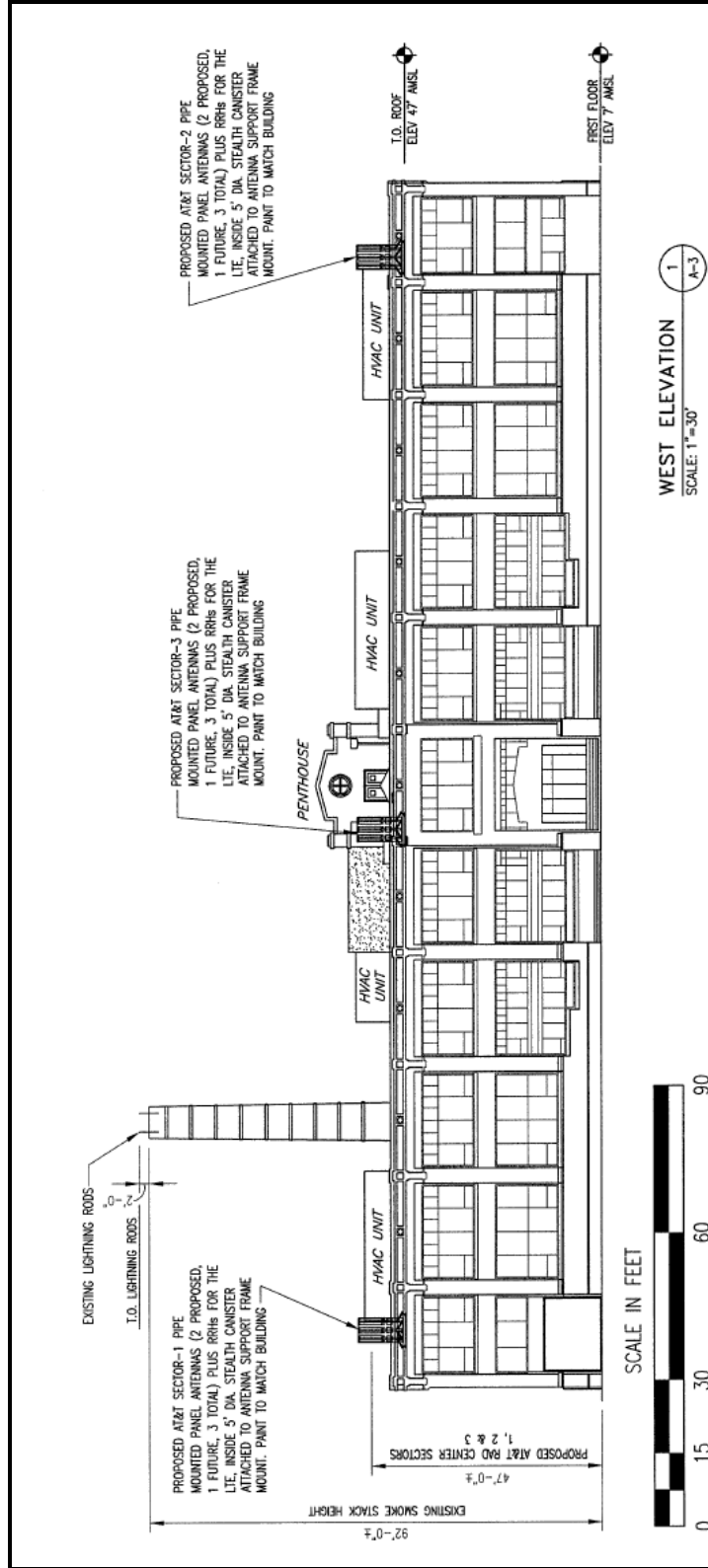


Figure 8: Union Street Elevation – Proposed

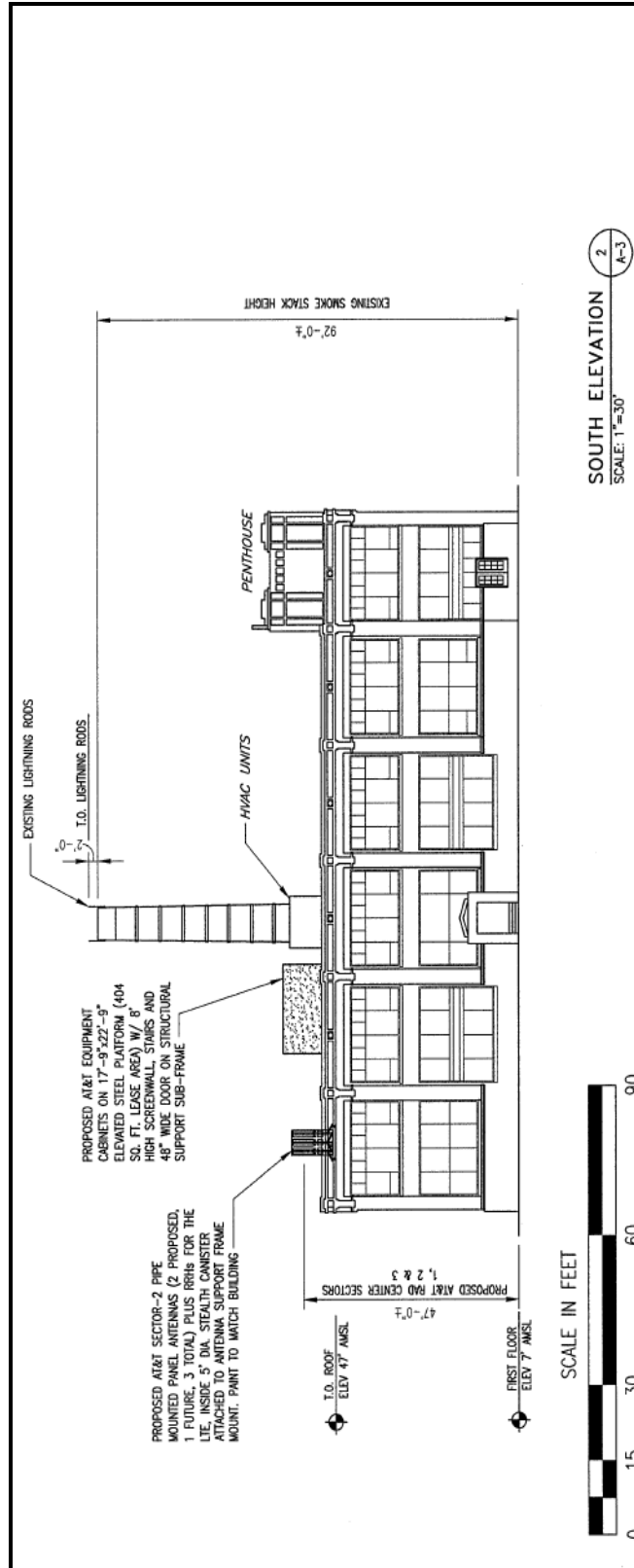


Figure 9: North Elevation - Proposed



**Figure 10: Sample of Color/Texture for Cylinders**