

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
September 27, 2016 Meeting**

3. **CAR No. 16-143** (W. Daniel)

**3012 Monument Avenue
Monument Avenue Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

**Install rooftop cellular antennas
in a faux chimney structure.**

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant requests approval to install a rooftop wireless facility on a three story apartment building in the Monument Avenue Old and Historic District. The applicant came before the Commission on June 28, 2016, and received a Certificate of Appropriateness to install rooftop cellular antennas on this apartment building with the conditions that a faux chimney not be installed to camouflage the antenna and the antennas be moved further back on the roof than proposed in a location to be reviewed and administratively approved by staff. At that meeting, the applicant noted that if the antennas were to be located in the center of the building, they would be a greater height than was proposed for the antennas at the corner location. The Commission noted that a tall chimney at the center of the building would be inappropriate therefore they conditioned to allow for a taller wireless facility that would not need to be camouflaged. The applicant explored locating the antennas at the center of the roof as requested by the Commission. The applicant has noted that the antennas would need to be 10 feet in height to provide the desired coverage and at this height would require additional weight on a mounting sled to maintain stability. The applicant has noted that the building's roof is sloped and is unable to bear the weight of the sled.

With this application, the applicant is proposing to locate the antenna array in a faux chimney that will be 18 feet back from the façade along the eastern elevation. The proposed faux chimney will extend 3.2' from the top of the existing parapet wall. The proposed height is the same as the previous application. The applicant is proposing to maintain the associated mechanical equipment and coax cables in the same locations as was previously approved.

Staff recommends approval of the project with condition. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that the visual impact of new mechanical equipment should be minimized to protect the historic character of the district (pg. 64). Specifically in regards to communication equipment, the *Guidelines* note that equipment should not be located at the front of a building and should be located in the least visually obstructive location on the property (pg. 64, Communications Equipment #1, #2). With this revised application, the applicant has moved the proposed antennas back from the façade which limits the visual impact of the installation on the structure and the District. Though the antennas will be visible from Monument Avenue, staff

recommends approval as the antennas will be screened and an effort has been made to locate the antennas in the least visually obtrusive location that provides the level of service desired.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation in Section 30-930.7(b) of the City Code, as well as with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.