

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ACTION

RE: 120 DWIGHT STREET, Special Permit for Additions to Existing Telecommunications Facility (Owner: Lawrence Realty Company; Applicant: Sprint Nextel Corporation).
REPORT: 1438-04
ACTION: Approval with Conditions

BACKGROUND

Sprint Nextel seeks a Special Permit for additions to an existing Telecommunications Facility. Two previous Building permits for telecommunications were issued to Sprint: #2001-0560 for upgrades to existing equipment and #106285 (May 2, 1997) to install telecommunications equipment. A Special Exception was required but none is on record.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The submitted roof plan shows the existing location upgraded by adding three antennas to the existing mounts, three microwave antennas on new mounts on the existing frame and one GPS antenna at a new location on the roof. One new equipment cabinet will be installed in the existing basement equipment room.

The existing equipment is unscreened and the proposed additions do not indicate screening will be provided. Photosims included in the application and photos taken during a site visit by Commission staff show the existing antennas visible from the street.

This structure, built in 1926, is in the Dwight National Register Historic District. As a contributing structure the style is described as Twentieth Century Eclectic. It is a 6-story brick and pre-cast concrete building with a flat roof. Above the pilasters and stretching across the façade is a brick band with diamond-patterned brickwork at the parapet.

In general, the Dwight Historic District is characterized as having a residential scale of two to three story late 19th and early 20th century buildings. However, larger multi-family dwellings including some larger apartment houses punctuate the district. The subject property is one such example.

The Commission takes great care to protect and preserve the integrity of New Haven's historic districts. In the past the Commission has required screening on buildings of historic value and that sentiment holds true in this case as well. Opaque screening is a tested and valid method to mitigate the visual impact of antennas to the surrounding area.

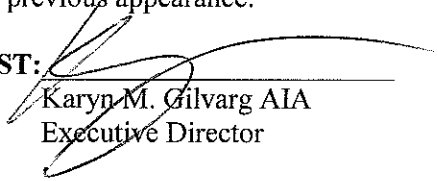
ACTION

The Commission finds the overall project takes advantage of existing equipment and is well within the bounds of reason but notes screening can and should be used to hide the antennas from view. For these reasons the Commission approves with Conditions:

1. Approval is for the addition of three antennas, three microwave antennas and one new GPS antenna to be installed as shown on the submitted plans.
2. The telecommunications facility shall be screened using an opaque material painted a color to match the building. Screening design shall be reviewed by the City Plan Department, prior to issuance of permit. The GPS Antenna does not have to be screened due to its small size and unobtrusive location, but shall be painted a color that matches the building.
3. An original signed copy of this decision/report shall be recorded on the City's Land Records. Proof of such recording (volume and page number) shall be provided to the City Plan Department, prior to issuance of permit for installation.
4. There shall be no advertising of any sort allowed on any Wireless Telecommunications Facility visible to the public.

5. Sprint Nextel shall submit to the Zoning Administrator annually during the month of January an affidavit that the facility is in active use as a wireless site and shall certify that such use will continue for the coming calendar year.
6. If this wireless site becomes inactive for six consecutive months in any calendar year or part of any calendar year, the service facility owner shall remove it. This removal shall occur within ninety days of the end of such six-month period. Upon removal the site shall be restored to its previous appearance.

ADOPTED: March 17, 2010
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: 
Karyn M. Gilvarg AIA
Executive Director