CITY OF SAINT PAUL
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

FILE NAME: 612 Selby Ave
DATE OF APPLICATION: March 6, 2014
APPLICANT: David W. Fischer, Buell Consulting Inc.
OWNER: St. Paul Development Corp.
DATE OF HEARING: March 27, 2014
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Hill Historic Heritage Preservation District
CATEGORY: Contributing
CLASSIFICATION: Building permit
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Bill Dermody
DATE: March 20, 2014

A. SITE DESCRIPTION:
The subject building, known as the "Pittsburgh Building", is a three-story Classical Revival brick commercial building that was constructed in 1915 at the southeast corner of Dale Street and Selby Avenue. The building has a massive overhanging pressed metal cornice with paired brackets and dentils. It has a flat roof with parapet. The building, which has addresses of 612 and 614, is physically contiguous with the building to the west at 616-618 Selby Ave (also known as 170 N. Dale St.) and immediately across a driveway from a building to the east at 606 -610 Selby Ave.

B. PROPOSED CHANGES:
The applicant proposes to mount six cellular antennas on the roof top and install a metal platform and telecommunications equipment at the southeast side of the building. The antennas are in three separated pairs, each mounted upon a sled. The antennas extend up to approximately 8' above the front parapet, from which the closest pair is set back approximately 17'-6". The platform is proposed to be located 7'-7 ½" off the ground in the building's rear. New metal panning will enclose wiring that runs from the equipment platform up to the roof along the building exterior.

C. BACKGROUND:
There is no telecommunications history for the subject site prior to this application. In 2010, HPC staff approved window signage in the front and refrigeration piping that utilized existing holes at the building's rear elevation. In 2006, awning signage was approved on the attached building (218 Selby). In 2003, HPC staff approved gooseneck wall lights to replace lights that had previously been installed without HPC review. In 2002, HPC staff approved a second-story building sign. In 1995, HPC staff approved a shade cover attached to the 218 building rear. In 1992, the HPC denied an application for a backlit awning and building sign. In 1990, the buildings received HPC staff approval for their flat roofs to be re-roofed per existing design. Also in 1990, the HPC approved a change in the storefront windows and doors on the Dale Street façade of the neighboring building, which built upon a previous HPC approval from 1987. In 1989, the neighboring property received HPC staff approval for a deck and privacy fence on its south side. In 1987, both buildings received HPC approval to attach awnings with the intent that they be used for signage. In 1986, the building received HPC approval for window repair, installation of enamel-finished windows, storefront reconstruction, construction of a deck and stair system at the rear of the east elevation, painting of exterior wood and the metal cornice, and tuckpointing. In 1983, the HPC approved an exterior rehabilitation of the building.

D. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:
Hill Historic District Design Review Guidelines
Sec. 74.64. - ***Restoration and Rehabilitation***
(a) General Principles:

1. *Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.*
2. *The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.*
3. *All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.*
4. *Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. Theses changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.*
5. *Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.*
6. *Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.*
7. *The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.*
8. *Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by, or adjacent to any project.*
9. *Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.*
10. *Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.*

Sec. 74.65. - New construction.

(a) *General Principles:* The basic principle for new construction in the Historic Hill District is to maintain the district's scale and quality of design. The Historic Hill District is architecturally diverse within an overall pattern of harmony and continuity. These guidelines for new construction focus on general rather than specific design elements in order to encourage architectural innovation and quality design while maintaining the harmony and continuity of the district. New construction should be compatible with the size, scale, massing, height, rhythm, setback, color, material, building elements, site design, and character of surrounding structures and the area.

(b) *Massing and Height:* New construction should conform to the massing, volume, height and scale of existing adjacent structures. Typical residential structures in the Historic Hill District are twenty-five (25) to forty (40) feet high. The height of new construction should be no lower than the average height of all buildings on both block faces; measurements should be made from street level to the highest point of the roofs. (This guideline does not supersede the city's zoning code height limitations.)

(c) *Rhythm and Directional Emphasis:* The existence of uniform narrow lots in the Historic Hill District naturally sets up a strong rhythm of buildings to open space. Historically any structure built on more than one (1) lot used vertical facade elements to maintain and vary the overall rhythm of the street rather than interrupting the rhythm with a long monotonous facade. The directional expression of new construction should relate to that of existing adjacent structures.

(d) *Material and Details:*

(1) Variety in the use of architectural materials and details adds to the intimacy and visual delight of the district. But there is also an overall thread of continuity provided by the range of materials commonly used by turn-of-the-century builders and by the way these materials were used. This thread of continuity is threatened by the introduction of new industrial materials and the aggressive exposure of earlier materials such as concrete block, metal framing and glass. The purpose of this section is to encourage the proper use of appropriate materials and details.

(2) The materials and details of new construction should relate to the materials and details of existing nearby buildings.

(3) Preferred roof materials are cedar shingles, slate and tile; asphalt shingles which match the approximate color and texture of the preferred materials are acceptable substitutes. Diagonal and vertical siding are generally unacceptable. Imitative materials such as asphalt siding, wood-textured metal or vinyl siding, artificial stone, and artificial brick veneer should not be used. Smooth four-inch lap vinyl, metal or hardboard siding, when well installed and carefully detailed, may be acceptable in some cases. Materials, including their colors, will be reviewed to determine their appropriate use in relation to the overall design of the structure as well as to surrounding structures.

(4) Color is a significant design element, and paint colors should relate to surrounding structures and the area as well as to the style of the new structure. Building permits are not required for painting and, although the heritage preservation commission may review and comment on paint color, paint color is not subject to commission approval.

(e) *Building Elements:* Individual elements of a building should be integrated into its composition for a balanced and complete design. These elements of new instruction should compliment existing adjacent structures as well.

(1) *Roofs:*

a. There is a great variety of roof treatment in the Historic Hill District, but gable and hip roofs are most common. The skyline or profile of new construction should relate to the predominant roof shape of existing adjacent buildings.

b. Most houses in the Historic Hill District have a roof pitch of between 9:12 and 12:12 (rise-to-run ratio). Highly visible secondary structure roofs should match the roof pitch of the main structure, and generally should have a rise-to-run ratio of at least 9:12. A roof pitch of at least 8:12 should be used if it is somewhat visible from the street, and a 6:12 pitch may be acceptable in some cases for structures which are not visible from the street.

c. Roof hardware such as skylights, vents and metal pipe chimneys should not be placed on the front roof plane.

(2) *Windows and doors:*

c. Although not usually improving the appearance of building, the use of metal windows or doors need not necessarily ruin it. The important thing is that they should look like part of the building and not like raw metal appliances. Appropriately colored or bronze-toned aluminum is acceptable. Mill finish (silver) aluminum should be avoided.

(g) *Public infrastructure:*

(3) Electric, telephone and cable TV lines should be placed underground or along alleys, and meters should be placed where inconspicuous.

E. FINDINGS:

1. The property is located in the Historic Hill Heritage Preservation District and is categorized as contributing.
2. On April 2, 1991, the Historic Hill Heritage Preservation District was established under Ordinance No. 17815, § 3(II). The Heritage Preservation Commission shall protect the architectural character of heritage preservation sites through review and approval or denial of applications for city permits for exterior work within designated heritage preservation sites §73.04.(4).
3. The subject building and adjoining building to the west are located at the southeast corner of Selby and Dale Streets. The buildings have primary elevations facing both streets.
4. **General Principles: Sec. 74.64(a) and Sec. 74.65(a)** The antennas and associated equipment are not *compatible with the…scale, massing…material, building elements…and character of surrounding structures and the area.* According to staff calculations based on the submitted plans, approximately 6'-3" of the most prominent antenna will be visible above the primary elevation's parapet to a viewer approximately 180' northwest of the building along the west side of Dale Street. By comparison, the primary elevation's windows are approximately 5'-0" tall. The antennas would be made more compatible if they were less prominent to the viewer than character-defining building elements such as the windows. According to staff calculations, a 2' height reduction in the antennas would make them appear 4'-3" high to the viewer at said vantage point across Dale Street –thereby more compatible with the building's scale, massing, building elements, and character. The antenna material could be compatible if colored and finished to blend with the building.

   The associated equipment at the building's rear is also incompatible *with the…scale, massing…material, building elements…and character of surrounding structures and the area.* However, its location on the non-primary elevation minimizes this concern. Also, the equipment, including wiring and panning, could be installed in a way that does not destroy or alter *any historic material or distinctive architectural features* such as the brick, so long as it anchored to the wall only in the mortar joints. Equipment should not obscure any architectural details such as the windows.
5. **Roofs: Sec. 74.64(d)** The proposed rooftop antennas are placed upon sleds that are not permanently attached to the building and will obscure, alter or destroy any architectural features or details.
6. **Public Infrastructure : Sec. 74.65(g)(3)** The proposed antennas, platform, and associated equipment are placed partially along the alley as called for by the guidelines. However, two pairs of antennas will be plainly visible above the primary elevation from certain viewpoints. Though placing the antennas near the front parapet is necessary for the service provider to supply desired wireless coverage, their visual impact should be minimized relative to character-defining features such as windows. As noted in Finding #4, the antennas as proposed appear larger than the character-defining windows as viewed above the parapet

from certain unobstructed viewpoints along Dale Street.

7. The proposal to add wireless antennas, a platform, and associated equipment will not adversely affect the Program for the Preservation and architectural control of the Historic Hill Heritage Preservation District (Leg. Code §73.06 (e)) so long as the conditions are met.

F. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the findings above, staff recommends approval of the proposal provided the following conditions are met:

1. The two sets of antennas closest to Selby Avenue shall be reduced in height by at least 2'.
2. The proposed antennas shall have a dark finish similar to that of the building's primary elevation.
3. The equipment, platform, and panning on the building's rear shall be painted the same color as the building wall so as to blend in.
4. Panning on the building's rear shall be anchored to the wall only in mortar joints and not through the brick. The panning shall not obscure or alter any architectural details such as window and door opening or brick headers and sills.
5. Any revisions to the approved plans must be submitted to the HPC and/or staff for review.
6. The HPC stamped approved plans must be kept on site during the construction project.

G. ATTACHMENTS

1. HPC Application
2. Plans
3. Photo Simulations