



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: June 6, 2019

PROJECT Antenna Installation at Building 52 US Naval Observatory 3450 Massachusetts Avenue, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 8076
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of Defense Department of the Navy	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 71.20(38.30)44933
REVIEW AUTHORITY Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of preliminary and final site development plans
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve preliminary and final site development plans
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Consent Calendar

PROJECT SUMMARY

The United States Department of Defense, Department of the Navy, has submitted preliminary site and final site development plans for the installation of an antenna on Building 52 within the United States Naval Observatory (USNO) campus in Washington, DC. The antenna will support security needs for the campus. The proposed three-inch mast will not extend higher than an existing chimney on the roof, and will be painted white to match the building.

The USNO campus is comprised of approximately 72 acres of land and is located in the northwest quadrant of the District of Columbia, approximately one-half mile west of Rock Creek, between Massachusetts Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue. It is surrounded by densely populated neighborhoods, with Woodley Park to the east, Georgetown to the south, Glover Park to the west, and the National Cathedral to the north. Four primary tenants occupy the USNO campus: United States Naval Observatory, Oceanographer of the Navy, United States Secret Service, and the Residence of the Vice President of the United States.

KEY INFORMATION

- A Master Plan for the United States Naval Observatory (USNO) was approved by the Commission in March 2014.
- The USNO campus has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, as a historic district, with buildings, structures, and landscape elements contributing to its historic significance. Buildings 3 and 78 are individually eligible for the National Register and Building 52 is a contributing building within the eligible district. Architect Richard Morris Hunt designed many of the historic buildings on the campus, the only known examples of his work in Washington, DC.

-
- The proposed antenna will be installed on Building 52, and will not extend any taller than a nearby chimney. The mast will be painted white to match the building.
 - The antenna will not be visible outside the USNO campus.
-

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary and final site development plans for the installation of an antenna a related equipment on Building 52 within the United States Naval Observatory Campus in northwest Washington, DC.

Notes the antenna will support security needs for the campus.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	None.
Remaining actions (anticipated)	None.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The proposed antenna will serve the security needs of the USNO campus. The location was chosen due to its elevation and requirements for a clear line of sight over surrounding area. The antenna will be located on the existing Building 52, and will not extend taller than a nearby chimney. It will not be visible outside the campus. Therefore, staff recommends that the **Commission approves the preliminary and final site development plans for the installation of an antenna a related equipment on Building 52 within the United States Naval Observatory Campus in northwest Washington, DC.**

Analysis

The USNO performs an essential scientific role for the United States, the Navy, and the Department of Defense. Its mission includes determining the positions and motions of the earth, sun, moon, planets, stars and other celestial objects; providing astronomical data; maintaining precise time; determining the earth's orientation in space; and maintaining the Master Clock for

the Department of the Defense. Observatory physicists; engineers, and technicians develop and maintain the Master Clock and its dissemination systems. This astronomical and timing data, essential for accurate navigation and the support of communications on earth and in space, is vital to the Navy and Department of Defense. It is also used extensively by other agencies of the government and the public at large.

The antenna will support the security of the campus. In order to meet minimal requirements for performance, the system must have significant elevation and clear line of sight over surrounding area. The proposed three-inch mast will be mounted on the back exterior wall of the elevator room on the roof of Building 52. The mast is fabricated from galvanized steel and will be painted to match the building to which it will be mounted. The equipment that will be bolted onto it is smooth and white in color. The mast will be the same height as the nearby chimney.

The antenna installation area is surrounded by existing HVAC equipment and other communications gear. Only the top of the mast will be visible from the ground within the observatory grounds. The surrounding area is heavily forested and the antenna will not be visible off-site. Other building sites were considered and dismissed due to line-of-site issues or operational conflicts with other systems.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The project generally meets the policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, particularly those related to avoiding adverse effects on historic properties and minimizing visual impacts where possible.

National Historic Preservation Act

The Department of the Navy has determined that no further review of the project proposals is required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The DC State Historic Preservation Office submitted a email dated April 9, 2019 concurring that the project will have no adverse effect on historic properties. Due to its review authority over the project, NCPC has an independent obligation to carry out the requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA for the antenna installation. NCPC has elected to designate the Navy as lead agency pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.2(a)(2) to satisfy the Commission's Section 106 responsibility related to the undertaking.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, the Navy concluded that the project qualifies for a categorical exclusion based on applicable environmental review standards. Due to its review authority over the project, NCPC has an independent obligation to carry out the requirements of NEPA for each project. Staff finds that each project is in conformance with NCPC Categorical Exclusion requirements under § 601.12 (a)(5) of the Commission's

National Environmental Policy Act Regulation. Staff examination finds the proposed installation adheres to the Commission's exclusion requirements.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposed antenna installation at its May 15, 2019 meeting and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all participating agencies. Participating agencies included NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District of Columbia State and Historic Preservation Office; the General Services Administration; the District Department of Transportation; the District Department of the Environment; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

On May 16, 2019, the Commission of Fine Arts approved by consent the proposed antenna installation.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at www.ncpc.gov:

- Project Synopsis

Prepared by Matthew Flis
05/30/2019

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

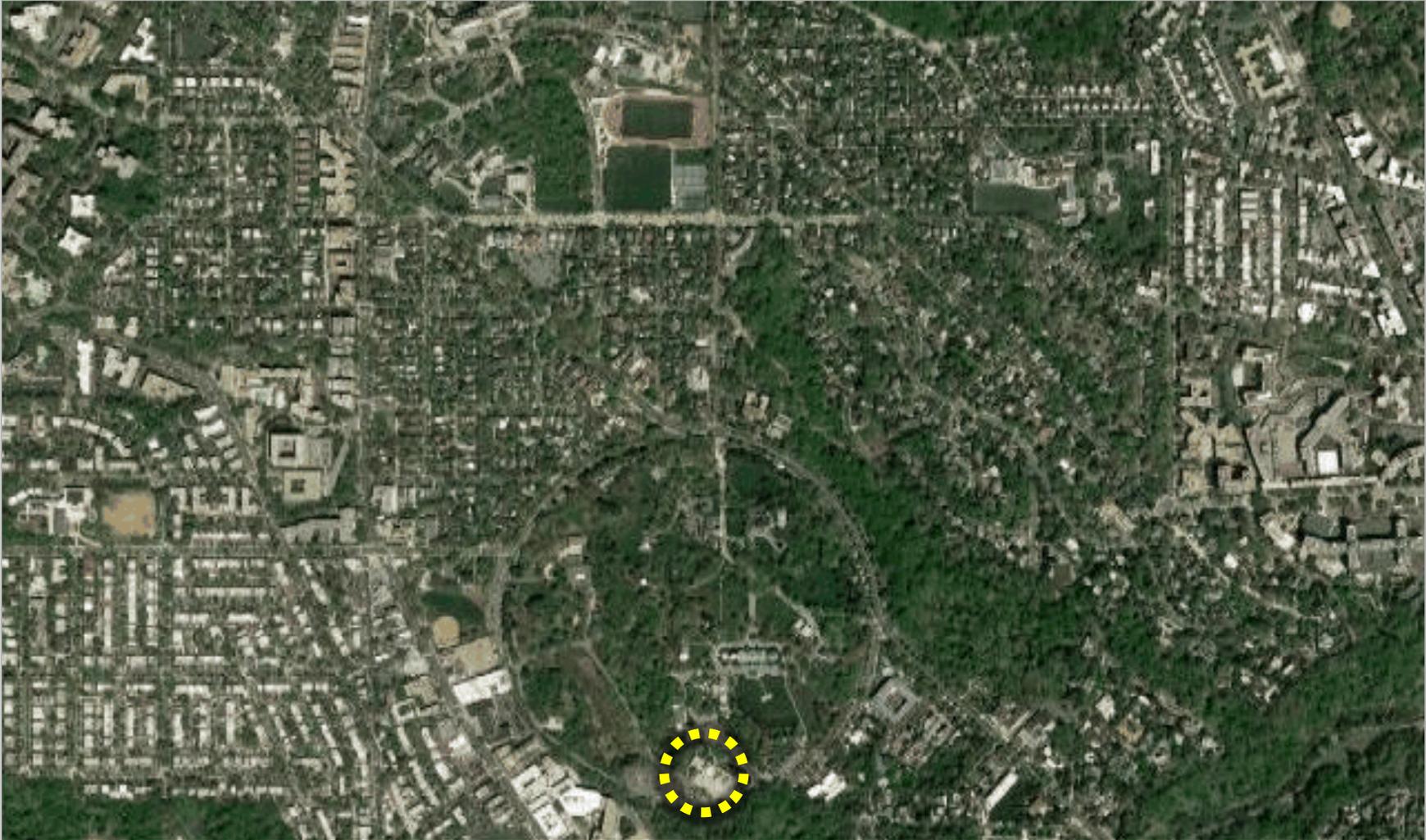
United States Naval Observatory, Building 52 Antenna

3450 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington DC

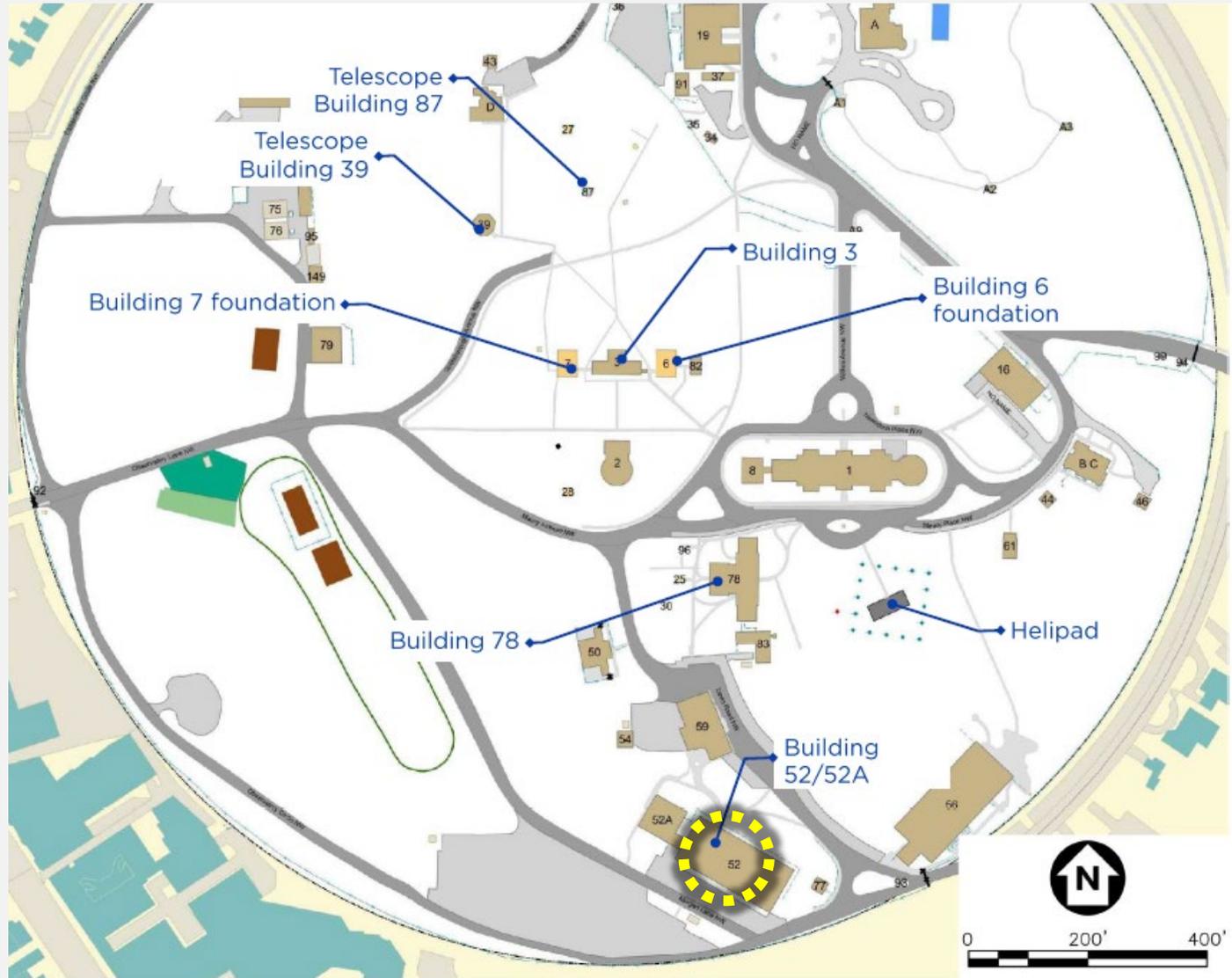
Approval of Preliminary and Final Site Development Plans

United States Department of Defense

Site Location



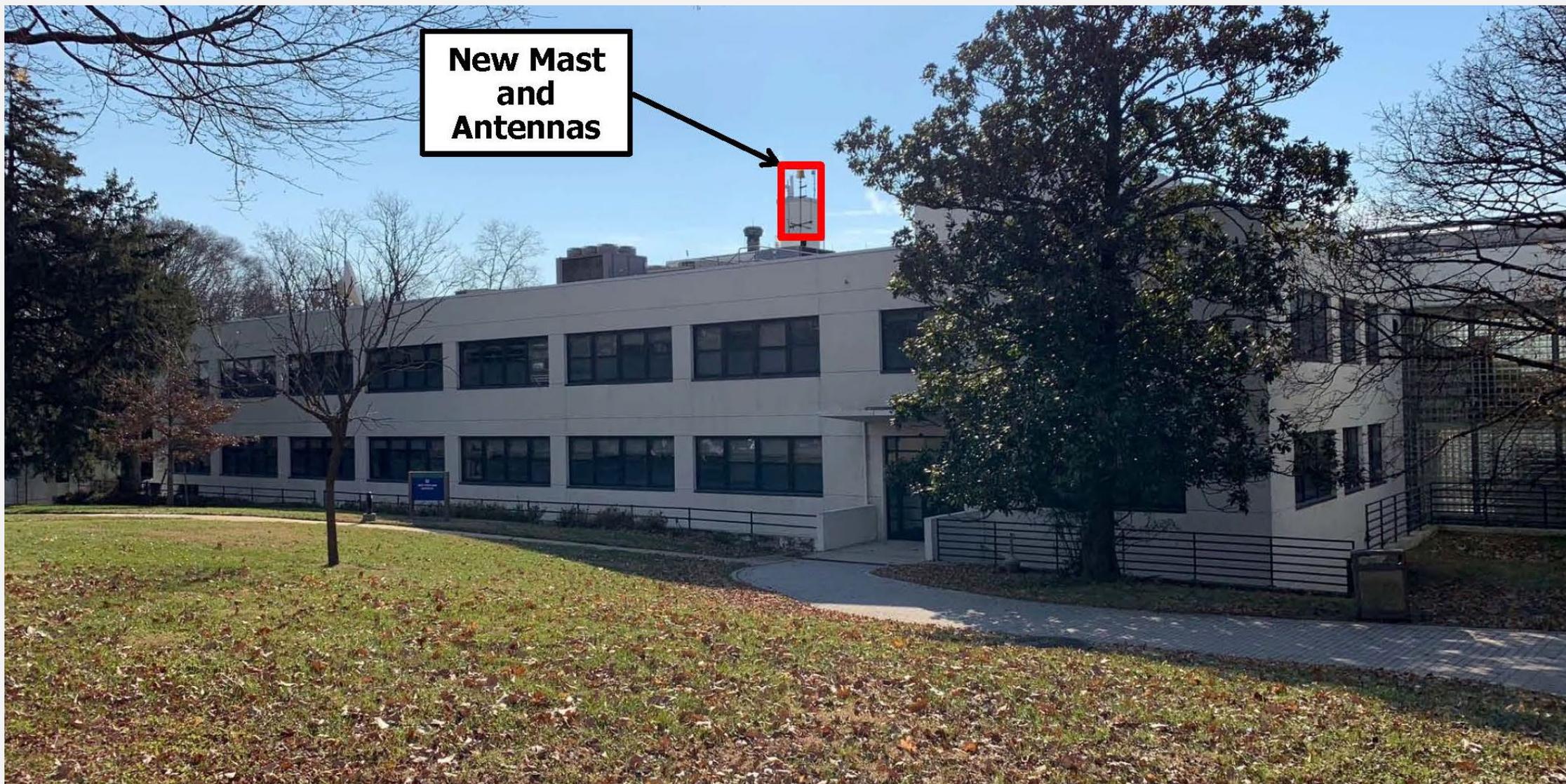
Location Map



Existing Conditions

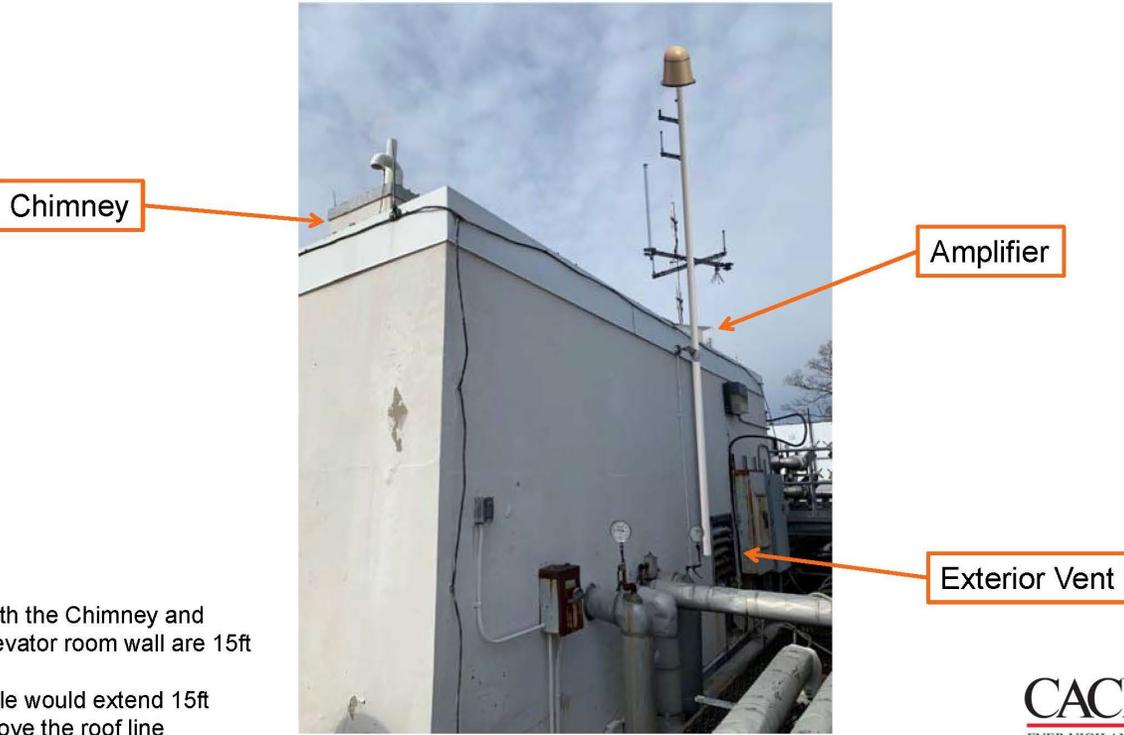


Proposed Antenna



Mounting Mockup and Perspective

Exterior Mounting Mockup



Exterior Mount Perspective



